



NATIONAL VETERANS CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL

2021 Competition Handbook

Presented by

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



American Legion
Auxiliary

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Message from the Director

While COVID-19 continues to impact our lives daily, we know the benefits of creating art can have far reaching effects on one's overall health and well-being. Studies show that spending time on a creative arts project can relieve stress, strengthen thinking skills and improve memory. Though art you can inspire and encourage others. No matter how far apart we are, art can help us to relax and bring us closer together.

The 2021 local creative arts competitions may look different this year. Each VA facility is taking preventative measures out of concern for the safety and well-being of Veterans, including visitors and staff at VA facilities. There may not be in-person art/writing/performance shows taking place this year on VA campuses. Veterans may need to submit their own images, videos, and text to the VA staff contact persons rather than dropping things off in person.

The following are competition rules and categories. There **are many changes** in the competition handbook this year. Please take the time to review this handbook carefully. If you have further questions or need assistance, you may contact the national chairpersons or me at any time.

Veterans, we thank you for sincerely for sharing your creativity with us and staff, we thank you for supporting Veterans in their creative endeavors.

Amy Kimbler, MT-BC
Director, National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

National Veterans Creative Arts Competition Highlights

Local Competition Explanation

This program begins with VA medical facilities holding local creative arts competitions to meet the national rule that only one entry per category may move forward to the national level for judging. Local competitions across the country may look different with some facilities having many entries in their local competition to determine first place winners while other VA facilities may only have a few entries moving on to the national level. Both are acceptable.

Local VA Competition Deadline Date

Veterans: In January, check with the VA facility where you are enrolled to find out the submission deadline date of their local competition. Each VA sets their own deadline dates and expectations for their local competitions. Competitions may look different this year due to COVID restrictions. Veterans may need to submit their own images, videos, and text to the local staff contact persons. There may not be an in-person art/writing/performance show at the local level.

National Competition Deadline Date – Friday, October 1

Staff: All entries submitted to the national level of competition **must be received on or before Friday, October 1, 2021.** The competition phase of the program has been redesigned to allow more time for VA facilities to coordinate their local competition due to COVID.

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival – Next Face to Face Event

All first-place winners in each division at the national level of competition will be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival held in **St. Petersburg, Florida April 18-24, 2022.**

Redesigned Division Categories

Review the Creative Writing, Dance, Drama and Music divisions carefully. Categories within these divisions have been changed.

Local Competition Branding

When hosting your local competition be sure to explain to media outlets that you are hosting a local competition. This is different than hosting the Festival event.

Example: National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, St. Cloud Competition or
 St. Cloud Veterans Creative Arts Competition

First place winners at the VA facility competition will advance to the national level to compete in the National Veterans Creative Arts Competition. First place winners at the national level of the competition will be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF).

National Veterans Creative Arts Competition Highlights

CBOCs and Vet Centers

VA Staff at Community Based Outpatient Clinics and Vet Centers may host their own local competitions. Veterans must still be enrolled to receive care in the VA health care system prior to entering the competition.

Therapeutic Arts Scholarship

Each medical facility may nominate one Veteran from their VA to be considered for a Therapeutic Arts Scholarship. See details on pages 11-14.

Judging Process and Competition Results

It is recommended that staff meet with the Veterans to explain the judging process at the local and national level. As with other juried competitions the results are based on subjective reviews by a panel of judges. The scores are not shared publicly, and the judges' decisions are final.

National Competition Entry Submission Process – New Arts4Vets App

New for 2021 – Entries will be submitted **only by VA staff** to the national level of the competition using a newly designed Arts4Vets App. The app is still in the design phase. Live training sessions will be offered to VA staff and step by step instructional handouts will be distributed in advance.

Non-VA Staff from other government Veteran medical facilities unfortunately will not have upload access to the Arts4Vets App and may continue to submit entries in other ways. Please reach out to the National Director or division chairpersons to coordinate.

Veterans will not be able to submit their own entries through to the national level of competition or directly into the Arts4Vets App. They must work with the VA facility where they are enrolled and meet the local competition deadline dates.

Funding for Travel

Funding support and arrangements for travel to and from the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival for Veterans invited to attend the NVCAF is the responsibility of the local VA facility.

Lodging, meals and ground transportation during the Festival week will be provided through national Festival funds. These expenses will be provided for up to **5 eligible Veterans** invited in the Group Art category and Creative Writing Special Recognition category and up to **5 eligible Veterans** invited in the group categories of the dance, drama, and music divisions.

National Chairpersons

| Art Division Fine Art & Military Combat Experience Categories | Art Division Applied Art & Group Art Categories | Art Division Craft Kit & Special Recognition Categories |
|--|--|--|
| Nadene Stillings (OT1) National Fine Art Chairperson ENRM Veterans Hospital 200 Springs Road Bedford, MA 01730 Phone: (781) 687-3199 Cell : 781-382-5996 FAX: (781) 687-3305 E-mail: Nadene.Stillings@va.gov | Karen Wait (117/JB) National Applied Art Chairperson VA Medical Center #1 Jefferson Barracks Drive St. Louis, MO 63125 Phone: (314) 652-4100 x64535 E-mail: Karen.Wait@va.gov | Kari Fritz (654/18) National Craft Kit Chairperson VA Sierra Nev. Health Care System 975 Kirman Avenue Reno, NV 89502 Phone: (775) 785-7119 FAX: (775) 785-7003 E-mail: Kari.Fritz@va.gov |

| Creative Writing | Dance | Drama |
|--|---|--|
| Madge Scherer (EC117) National CW Chairperson VA Health Care System 4801 Veterans Drive St. Cloud, MN 56303 Phone: (320) 252-1670 x7336 FAX: (320) 255-6327 E-mail: Madge.Scherer@va.gov | Natalie Cole (116RT) National Dance Chairperson VA Medical Center 1201 NW 16 th Street Miami, FL 33125 Phone: (305) 575-7000 x6740 Cell: (786) 831-0131 E-mail: Natalie.Cole@va.gov | Dana Castanier (122TR) National Drama Chairperson VA Medical Center 5500 Armstrong Road Battle Creek, MI 49037 Phone: (269) 966-5600 x33933 FAX: (269) 223-6101 E-mail: Dana.Castanier@va.gov |

| Music Vocal Categories | Music Instrumental, Band, & Special Recognition Categories |
|---|--|
| Jillian Thompson (117C) National Music Co-Chairperson VA Medical Center 508 Fulton Street Durham, NC 27705 Phone: (919) 286-0411 x17 7728 Cell: (512) 627-3977 E-mail: Jillian.Thompson3@va.gov | Erin Todd - 11WH (Attn: RCATS) National Music Co-Chairperson VA Medical Center 10,000 Bay Pines Blvd. Bldg. 111 Rm. 1A-112 Bay Pines, FL 33744 Phone: (727) 398-6661 x15884 Cell: (727) 222-2686 E-mail: Erin.Todd@va.gov |

National Rules – The Competition

1. **ELIGIBILITY:** Veterans must be enrolled to receive care at a VA medical facility before entering a local competition. This facility should be the site where he/she receives their primary care. He/she can submit an entry in creative writing, dance, drama or music categories with a Veteran or group from another VA facility, but still represents and must go through his/her originating VA facility to enter the competition. Veterans are only permitted to enter through one VA facility competition each year.
2. Each Veteran must work with a VA staff person from the VA facility at which he/she receives his/her primary treatment to submit entries into the competition.
3. VA staff must submit their local facility first place entries to the Arts4Vets App no later than Friday, October 1, 2021 for Veterans to be eligible to compete at the national level.
4. The entry forms in this handbook should be used to gather the necessary information for each entry. Staff should retain the entry forms and the necessary consent forms for reference and verification purposes as needed. Each division has entry forms that are specific for their division. Please use the forms provided in this handbook to make copies as needed.
5. A 10-3203 form (Consent for Production and Use of Verbal or Written Statements, Photographs, Digital Images, and/or Video or Audio Recordings by VA) must be completed and signed by every Veteran entering the local and national level of competition. These forms should not be sent to the national chairpersons. VA staff contact persons should safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.
6. Entries created/recorded/written by Veterans who have passed away prior to the national deadline of October 1, 2021 are not eligible to be submitted to the national level of competition.
7. Veterans may only submit one entry per category.
8. No one Veteran will be allowed to enter more than three art categories and one group category in the art division. No one Veteran will be allowed to enter more than three creative writing categories in the creative writing division. No one Veteran will be allowed to enter more than three solo categories and three group categories in the dance, drama and music divisions.
9. Veterans may not expand the number of their entries in any one division using a different name (for example: pen names, stage names, different artist names, etc.).
10. A single entry may not be submitted into two or more categories within the same division. It is acceptable however for an entry to be submitted into multiple divisions if the rules are followed for each division.
11. Send only the first-place winners from your competition. Only one entry for each category will be accepted from a VA facility.

National Rules – The Competition (continued)

12. First-place ties in a category at the local competition MUST be re-judged at the local level as only one entry for each category will be accepted from each VA facility. A formal competition is not required at the local level but is strongly encouraged. All eligible Veterans should be given the opportunity to participate regardless of degree of talent.
13. Veterans who have received a gold medal in the same category from any of the 5 divisions (art, creative writing, dance, drama, and music) for two consecutive years must enter a different category the third year. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the entry being disqualified.
14. Veterans may not enter the same art, creative writing, dance, drama and music entry again after it has won first-place nationally. Failure to comply with this rule will result in disqualification of the entry. Additionally, Veterans should be encouraged to enter new material each year.
15. References to diagnosis and explanations of emotional or personal content related to the Veteran will not be read or communicated to the national judges. The exception to this rule is an entry submitted into a category that requires a write-up.
16. Veterans in national first, second and third place groups of up to five in art, creative writing, dance, drama and music will each be presented a medal. Groups of 6 or more will be presented a medal if possible or will be provided an award certificate. Non-Veterans and Veterans serving as accompanists, or dance partners, or dramatic readers that enhance an entry will not receive medals or certificates.
17. Prior to submitting entries in the competition, eligible Veterans who are also VA employees should discuss leave options/restrictions with their supervisor in the event they might be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.
18. **Final results of each of the five divisions of competition will be sent via E-mail to VA staff contact persons by mid-December.**

Art Division

- All artwork entered (except for the Military Combat Experience, category 14) must have been completed after April 1, 2020.
- Art entries must be submitted as digital .JPEG images. Do not submit the actual art or photographs of the art as they will be disqualified.
- All Veterans who place first at the national level in the art division of the competition will be invited to the Festival.
- Following the national judging, the first-place pieces from each art division category should be shipped to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival host VA facility location (2022 – Bay Pines VA Healthcare System). Entries that are extremely fragile may not be shipped and will instead be displayed in the Festival art exhibit as a poster image.

National Rules – The Competition (continued)

Creative Writing Division

- Entries in the creative writing division must have been completed after April 1, 2020.
- Creative Writing entries must be submitted as Word documents. Do not send PDF documents or documents with graphics.
- All Veterans who place first at the national level in the creative writing division of the competition will be invited to the Festival.

Dance, Drama, and Music Divisions

- Entries in the dance, drama and music divisions must be recorded after April 1, 2020.
- Dance, drama and music entries must be video recorded and submitted as MP4, .WMV, or .MOV files. (VOB files will not be accepted.)
- Entry length should be approximately 3 minutes. The national competition judges suggest WOWING them in the first 3 minutes. Entry content that continues longer than 3 minutes may not be viewed.
- Music entries must be recorded live. No voice-over dubbing will be allowed. No lip syncing to a pre-recorded track will be allowed.
- TITLE PAGE – Each entry must have a title page displayed prior to the entry being shown. The title page should include the Category and the Title of the Entry. The title page can be inserted during the editing process or it can be done manually prior to the taping. It is acceptable to hold up a handwritten sign that states the category and title of piece.
- Entries submitted on CDs will still be allowed. Be sure to label the CDs sent to each division (dance, drama, and music) chairperson. Label the CD with the **city and state of your VA facility**. Also include the **division and category number**. Separate CDs are still required for each entry.

For example: St. Cloud, MN - Music Division - Cat. 1

- All Veterans who place first at the national level in the dance, drama, and music division of the competition will be invited to the Festival.

***The national chairpersons and judges of the competitions reserve the right to disqualify an entry if the above rules are not followed.**

National Rules – The Festival

1. Following the national judging, Veterans invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF) will be notified by their VA staff contact person. **Veterans who are invited and accept the invitation must submit all required Festival registration forms to the host site of the NVCAF no later than February 1, 2022.**
2. **Funding support and arrangements for travel to and from the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival for Veterans invited to attend the NVCAF is the responsibility of the local VA facility.** Lodging, meals and ground transportation during the Festival will be provided through national Festival funds. These expenses will be provided for up to 5 eligible Veterans invited in the Group Art category and Creative Writing Special Recognition category and up to 5 eligible Veterans invited in the group categories of the dance, drama, and music divisions.
3. Stage show performance costumes for winning acts invited to the Festival will be the responsibility of the Veterans. Male participants will be requested to bring black pants, black shoes, black belt, and a white collared, long-sleeve dress shirt. Other production number costumes such as vests, ties, etc., will be provided. Women participants will be provided a Festival chorus dress and will be asked to bring black shoes.
4. Veterans who are invited to the Festival must be prepared (either themselves or through their VA staff contact person) to send an E-mail including the lyrics for music and dance and words/narration for drama entries in order for this text to be placed in the show script. E-mails can be sent to Suzanne.Anderson4@va.gov.
5. **NO GLASS PROTECTIVE LAYER (on flat art) MAY BE USED WHEN SHIPPING NATIONAL FIRST PLACE ARTWORK TO THE FESTIVAL. PLEXIGLAS MUST BE USED INSTEAD.** Artwork placed under protective glass and shipped to the NVCAF host VA facility will forfeit their placement in the national competition due to the risk of potential injury to persons unpacking the piece and potential damage to the artwork.
6. Veterans who are invited to the Festival and accept the invitation to attend must commit to participating fully in the Festival week to the best of their ability. This includes all workshops, seminars, rehearsals, outings, exhibitions, stage show performance, etc.

Therapeutic Arts Scholarship

Shirley Jefferies and Muriel Barbour Memorial

Shirley Jefferies, a recreation therapist at the Waco, Texas, VA Medical Center, and former chief of recreation therapy at the Knoxville, Iowa VA medical facility, initiated the performing arts competition, The National Music Competition for Veterans, in 1981 as part of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

Muriel Barbour, former chief of recreation therapy at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia, created the visual arts competition, VET ARTS, in 1981, as an observance of the International Year of Disabled Persons.

The Music Festival and VET ARTS merged and drama and dance divisions were added, to create the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in 1989. In 2005, the creative writing division was added to the Festival roster. Shirley Jefferies passed away in 1994. Muriel Barbour passed away in November 2009. The Therapeutic Arts Scholarship is presented in their memory.

The Therapeutic Arts Scholarship is a unique opportunity for Veterans entering the Creative Arts Competition. VA staff persons may nominate one Veteran from their facility for consideration to attend the Festival based on a therapeutic objective. The Veteran(s) who are selected will receive an invitation to participate at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival with lodging and meals provided via national Festival funds. Scholarship recipients will be notified via their staff contact person after the competition results are announced.

Nomination Criteria:

- Only one Veteran may be nominated for a scholarship from each facility
- Veteran must be a first-place winner in the local level of competition in any of the competition divisions.
- Veterans who have attended a National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in a former year are not eligible to be nominated for a scholarship.
- Consent form 10-3203 and 10-5345 must be signed and dated by the Veteran. The staff contact person submitting the entry for the Veteran should safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.

How do I nominate a Veteran from my VA?

VA staff must select the Veteran as their Therapeutic Arts Scholarship nominee during the entry submission process in the new Arts4Vets App. VA staff must include the written statement/narrative as part of the entry submission.

For VA facility staff: This form does not need to be uploaded into the Arts4Vets App. The narrative will be typed directly into the Arts4Vets App if a staff person selects a Veteran for a Therapeutic Arts Scholarship. Each VA medical facility may only nominate one Veteran from their facility.

Non-VA facility staff: Submission of this form will still be needed.

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------------|-----------------|
| VA Facility Representing: | | | |
| Facility Address: | | | |
| City: | | State: | |
| | | Zip: | |
| Staff Contact: | | | Routing Number: |
| Phone: | | E-mail (Required): | |
| | | | |

[illegible]

EVERY VETERAN MUST SIGN FORM 10-3203 TO COMPETE IN THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL CREATIVE ARTS COMPETITIONS. The signed form should not be submitted to the Arts4Vets App for national competition judging. The signed form must be safeguarded at the Veteran's VA facility.



Department of Veterans Affairs

CONSENT FOR PRODUCTION AND USE OF VERBAL OR WRITTEN STATEMENTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, DIGITAL IMAGES, AND/OR VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDINGS BY VA

Name of individual whose statement, likeness, or voice is requested:

NOTE: The execution of this form does not authorize production or use of materials except as specified below. The specified material may be produced and used by VA for authorized purposes identified below, such as education of VA personnel, research activities, or promotional efforts. It may also be disclosed outside VA as permitted by law and as noted below. If the material is part of a VA system of records, it may be disclosed outside VA as stated in the "Routine Uses" in the "VA Privacy Act Systems of Records" published in the Federal Register.

The purpose of this form is to document your consent to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) request to obtain, produce, and/or use a verbal or written statement or a photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording containing your likeness or voice. By signing this form, you are authorizing the production or use only as specified below.

You are NOT REQUIRED TO CONSENT TO VA's REQUEST to obtain, produce, and/or use your statement, likeness, or voice. Your decision to consent or refuse will not affect your access to any present or future VA benefits for which you are eligible.

You may rescind your consent at any time prior to or during production of a photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording, or before or during your provision of a verbal or written statement. You may rescind your consent after production is complete if the burden on VA of complying with that request is not unreasonable considering the financial and administrative costs and the ease of compliance of the number of parties involved and **the Veteran's VA facility and the Dept. of VA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs & Special Events.**

The photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording will be produced while I am (describe the activity or situation) **(To Be Completed by the Department of Veteran Affairs, if applicable)**

A participant in an adaptive sport or creative arts therapy program sponsored by the Veteran's VA facility and the Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (NVSP&SE) and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Check at least one of the following (to be completed by VA)

☒ I hereby voluntarily and without compensation authorize Department of Veterans Affairs NVSP&SE and the Veteran's VA facility to produce a photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording of me (or of the above named individual if the individual is legally unable to give consent).

☒ I hereby voluntarily and without compensation authorize Department of Veterans Affairs NVSP&SE and the Veteran's VA facility to obtain or use a verbal or written statement from me (or the of the above named individual if the individual is legally unable to give consent).

I consent to allowing VA to record and use a verbal or written statement, or produce and use photographs, digital images, and video or audio recording for the purpose(s) identified below:

This product will be used: (NOTE: At least one of these boxes must be checked as well as a purpose described below) (to be completed by VA)

☒ Internally (stay within VA) ☒ Externally (shared outside VA)

Please check the applicable purpose(s) (to be completed by VA)

Promotional Efforts:

☒ Internal Publication (only VA) ☒ External publication (publicly available)

☒ Other (Specify): Newspapers, radio stations, television stations, participant profiles, souvenir program booklet and DVD, and other media outlets. In addition, VA may release this information to sponsor organizations of the National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events in the form of other media products to promote the positive aspects of creative arts therapy.

Research Activities: ☒ Study

Education Purposes:

☒ Presentation ☒ Conference ☒ Publication in a Journal ☒ Training

☐ Other (Specify):

VA ONLY Use:

☐ Performance Improvement ☐ Quality Improvement ☐ Health Care Operations

☐ Other (Specify):

☒ All of the Above

NOTE: Do not sign this form unless one or more of the boxes above has been checked.

I have read and understand the foregoing, and I consent to the use of a verbal or written statement from me, and/or of my likeness and/or voice as specified for the above-described purpose(s). I understand that no royalty, fee, or other compensation of any kind will be made to me by the United States for such use. I understand that consent to obtain, produce, and/or use a verbal or written statement, photograph, digital image, and video or audio recording containing my likeness or voice is voluntary, and my refusal will not adversely affect my access to any present or future VA benefits for which I am eligible. I further understand that I may, at any time, rescind my consent prior to or during production of a photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording. I also understand that I may rescind my consent after production is complete if the burden on VA of complying with that request is not unreasonable considering the financial and administrative costs, the ease of compliance, and the number of parties involved.

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------|
| Print Veteran Full Name (First and Last Name) | Veteran Signature | Date |
| <i>Permission Obtained By (TO BE COMPLETED BY VA)</i> Print VA Employee Full Name | Title | Date |
| <i>Signature of Person Obtaining Consent (TO BE COMPLETED BY VA)</i> Print VA Employee Full Name | VA Employee Signature | Date |

IMPORTANT: If VA is providing or releasing any patient health or demographic information with the verbal or written statement, photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording, VA Form 10-5345, Request for and Authorization to Release Medical Records or Health Information, is required prior to the release of such data to any source outside VA.

VETERANS MUST SIGN FORM 10-5345 IF ENTERING CATEGORIES THAT REQUIRE A WRITE-UP (Military Combat Experience, Group Art, and all Special Recognition categories) **OR IF BEING NOMINATED FOR A THERAPEUTIC ARTS SCHOLARSHIP.** The signed form should not be submitted to the Arts4Vets App for national competition judging. The signed form must be safeguarded at the Veteran's VA facility.



Department of Veterans Affairs

REQUEST FOR AND AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE MEDICAL RECORDS OR HEALTH INFORMATION

Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Information: The execution of this form does not authorize the release of information other than that specifically described below. The information requested on this form is solicited under Title 38, U.S.C. The form authorizes release of information in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164, 5 U.S.C. 552a, and 38 U.S.C. 5701 and 7332 that you specify. Your disclosure of the information requested on this form is voluntary. However, if the information including Social Security Number (SSN) (the SSN will be used to locate records for release) is not furnished completely and accurately, Department of Veterans Affairs will be unable to comply with the request. The Veterans Health Administration may not condition treatment, payment, enrollment or eligibility on signing the authorization. VA may disclose the information that you put on the form as permitted by law. VA may make a "routine use" disclosure of the information as outlined in the Privacy Act systems of records notices identified as 24VA10P2 "Patient Medical Record - VA" and in accordance with the Notice of Privacy Practices. You do not have to provide the information to VA, but if you don't, VA will be unable to process your request and serve your medical needs. Failure to furnish the information will not have any effect on any other benefits to which you may be entitled. If you provide VA your Social Security Number, VA will use it to administer your VA benefits. VA may also use this information to identify veterans and persons claiming or receiving VA benefits and their records, and for other purposes authorized or required by law. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 requires us to notify you that this information collection is in accordance with the clearance requirements of section 3507 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. We may not conduct or sponsor, and you are not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number. We anticipate that the time expended by all individuals who must complete this form will average 2 minutes. This includes the time it will take to read instructions, gather the necessary facts and fill out the form.

ENTER BELOW THE PATIENT'S NAME AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER IF THE PATIENT DATA CARD IMPRINT IS NOT USED.

TO: DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (Print or type name and address of health care facility)

810 Vermont Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20420

PATIENT NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER:
(Unnecessary to provide for entering NVCA competition)

NAME AND ADDRESS OF ORGANIZATION, INDIVIDUAL OR TITLE OF INDIVIDUAL TO WHOM INFORMATION IS TO BE RELEASED:

Newspapers, radio stations, television stations, participant profiles, souvenir program booklet and DVD, and other media outlets. In addition, VA may release this information to sponsor organizations of the National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events in the form of other media products to promote the positive aspects of creative arts therapy.

VETERAN'S REQUEST: I request and authorize Department of Veterans Affairs to release the information specified below to the organization, or individual named on this request. I understand that the information to be released includes information regarding the following condition(s):
(Unnecessary to provide this information for entering 2021 NVCA competition)

☐ DRUG ABUSE ☐ ALCOHOLISM OR ALCOHOL ABUSE ☐ TESTING FOR OR INFECTION WITH HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV) ☐ SICKLE CELL ANEMIA

INFORMATION REQUESTED: (Check applicable box(es) and state the extent or nature of the information to be disclosed, giving the dates or approximate dates covered by each)

☐ COPY OF HOSPITAL SUMMARY ☐ COPY OF OUTPATIENT TREATMENT NOTE(S) ☒ **OTHER (Specify) General diagnosis or disability**

PURPOSE(S) OR NEED FOR WHICH THE INFORMATION IS TO BE USED BY INDIVIDUAL TO WHOM INFORMATION IS TO BE RELEASED:
To promote awareness of VA's National Programs and the positive impact of creative arts therapy.

NOTE: ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF INFORMATION DESIRED MAY BE LISTED ON THE BACK OF THIS FORM.

AUTHORIZATION: I certify that this request has been made freely, voluntarily and without coercion and that the information given above is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form after I sign it. I may revoke this authorization, in writing, at any time except to the extent that action has already been taken to comply with it. Written revocation is effective upon receipt by the Release of Information Unit at the facility housing the records. Redisclosure of my medical records by those receiving the above authorized information may not be accomplished without my further written authorization and may no longer be protected. Without my express revocation, the authorization will automatically expire: (1) upon satisfaction of the need for disclosure; (2) on _____ (date supplied by patient); (3) under the following condition(s):

I understand that the VA health care practitioner's opinions and statements are not official VA decisions regarding whether I will receive other VA benefits or, if I receive VA benefits, their amount. They may, however, be considered with other evidence when these decisions are made at a VA Regional Office that specializes in benefit decisions.

DATE

SIGNATURE OF PATIENT OR PERSON AUTHORIZED TO SIGN FOR PATIENT (Attach authority to sign, e.g., POA)

FOR VA USE ONLY

IMPRINT PATIENT DATA CARD (or enter Name, Address, Social Security Number)

TYPE AND EXTENT OF MATERIAL RELEASED

DATE RELEASED

RELEASED BY

Local Level Participation Form

Indicate each Veteran who submitted entries into the creative arts competition through your VA facility. This form should be completed and submitted regardless of whether you had a local competition. This form is used for data collection. **Attach additional pages as needed. Submit this completed form to Arts4Vets@va.gov after your local competition has ended.**

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| VA Facility: | Phone: |
| Staff Contact: | Email: |

Indicate total number of entries and Veterans who participated in each division:

| | # OF ENTRIES | # OF VETERANS |
|---------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Art Division | | |
| Creative Writing Division | | |
| Dance Division | | |
| Drama Division | | |
| Music Division | | |

| | | | | THE VETERAN COMPETED IN THE DIVISIONS BELOW (USE AN 'X') | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|--------|--|--|----|----|----|---|
| LAST NAME | FIRST INITIAL | GENDER | FIRST TIME PARTICIPATING IN THE <u>LOCAL</u> COMPETITION YES/NO | ART | CW | DA | DR | M |
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VA FACILITY:

THE VETERAN COMPETED IN THE DIVISIONS BELOW (USE AN 'X')

[illegible]

Art Division

VA Staff: Keep track of all Veterans who compete/enter through your VA facility and enter their information into **Local Level Participation form on page 15 of the handbook**. **Send this form to Arts4Vets@va.gov when your local competition has ended.**

Retain each of your VA facility's first-place winning entries and store them in a secure place.

First, second and third place in each art division category will be confirmed during the digital image judging process. The VA staff contact person of each first-place entry will be notified of the results.

Following the national judging, the first-place pieces from each art division category should be shipped to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival host VA facility location (2022 – Bay Pines VA Healthcare System). Entries that are extremely fragile may not be shipped and will instead be displayed in the Festival art exhibit as a poster image.

***Note: NO GLASS PROTECTIVE LAYER (on flat art) MAY BE USED WHEN SHIPPING NATIONAL FIRST PLACE ARTWORK TO THE FESTIVAL. PLEXIGLAS MUST BE USED INSTEAD.** Artwork placed under protective glass and shipped to the NVCAF host VA facility **will forfeit their placement in the national competition** due to the risk of potential injury to persons unpacking the piece and potential damage to the artwork.

Tips for Taking Better Digital Art Images

- **Two-dimensional pieces may submit two images** – one image as the total presentation and one image showing more detail.
- **Three-dimensional pieces may submit three images** – one image from the front, one image from the back or side and one in more detail.
- **The art piece should fill the photo** – get as close as possible so the piece fills the viewfinder of the camera. **Do not include the title card, show exhibit card, art award ribbon, etc. in the photo.**
- **Include the framing and matting of pictures** – these items are part of the total presentation. Pedestals or bases that are part of the artwork should also be included in the digital image.
- **Frame the piece using a neutral background** – colorful backgrounds can alter the color of your piece by reflecting onto it.
- **Watch for shadows on the background** – move the item being photographed away from the background to eliminate shadows.
- **Be alert for glare** – try changing the direction and location of the lighting or soften the light by bouncing it off a wall or screen.

Art Division Rules

1. Veterans need to communicate (as early as January 2021) with their local VA facility to find out their local competition deadline date.
2. **First-place ties in a category at the local competition MUST be re-judged at the local level as only one entry for each category will be accepted from each VA facility.** A formal competition is not required at the local level but is strongly encouraged. All eligible Veterans should be given the opportunity to participate regardless of degree of talent.
3. All artwork entered (except for the Military Combat Experience category #14) must have been **completed/photographed after April 1, 2020.** Artwork submitted in a prior year in any form of completion may not be entered again.
4. **Each VA facility may submit only one (1) entry in each art category** to the National level of the Art Competition.
5. Complete the art entry form with detail about the mediums and techniques used. This information is crucial to the judging process and is shared with the judges. Do not include Veteran diagnosis information or personal statements in the mediums/techniques section. This information is not part of the judging process unless submitting an entry into Military Combat Experience, Group Art, or the Special Recognition categories in which case a separate write-up is required.
6. Artwork created by a **group** of Veterans (two or more Veterans) **will qualify** for entry into the National Art Competition. **See Category #34 - Group Art.**
7. All art entries must be created solely by the Veteran and/or Veterans submitting the art entry.
8. Reproductions of original two-dimensional artwork, photographs, or computer-generated art (including inkjet, Giclee and other types of reproduction methods) will not be accepted. The use of Giclee is only acceptable in Printmaking (category 9), Black and White Photography (category 11), Color Photography (category 12) and Digital Art (category 13).
9. All 2 dimensional artwork must be exhibition ready (ready to hang for display).
10. If an entry contains a craft kit, it must go into a craft kit category unless otherwise stated in the category definitions (for example: soapstone carving kits go into the carving category).
11. GUNS, BLADES, KNIVES or other WEAPONS will **not** be accepted due to VA regulations banning these items from VA facilities.
12. No one Veteran will be allowed to enter more than three art categories and one group category in the art division.

13. Dioramas, dipped art, and puzzles (including puzzle kits) will not be accepted. Diorama definition: a model representing a **SCENE** with three-dimensional figures. For further clarification please contact the national art chairpersons.
14. **Two** electronic jpeg images may be submitted for each two-dimensional entry. Please include one image of the art entry in its entirety and one image of the art entry in more detail. **(Optimal image file size is 1 MB.)**
15. **Three** electronic jpeg images for each three-dimensional entry will be accepted. Please include one image from the front of the art entry in its entirety, one image from the back or side of the art entry in its entirety, and one image of the art entry close up in more detail. **(Optimal image file size is 1 MB.)**
16. Sets in the fine arts and applied arts can contain **no more than three** pieces. Chess sets are an exception. The pieces must relate to one another in an obvious way to the judges in order to be classified as a set. **No sets** are allowed in the kit categories, unless a single kit contains a set such as a set of suncatcher Christmas ornaments in which case, no more than 3 pieces may be submitted for judging.

Further clarification of sets:

- Examples of 2D sets are diptychs, triptychs, or series—no more than 3 separate pieces of artwork that are clearly intended to be displayed together as ONE PIECE with equal size and framing. Imagery/content must relate to each other in clear and obvious way.
 - 3D sets must relate to each other in an obvious way and may contain no more than 3 pieces for judging purposes.
17. Entries that include personal collections such as spoons, medals, or coins (where the content of the entry is not created by the Veteran) will not be accepted.
18. Entries that are first-place national competition winning pieces **MUST** be fully assembled when shipped.
19. **Artwork Size Restrictions** - Each national art entry must be able to fit into **one box**. The box can be up to 150 lbs., up to 165 inches in length and girth combined. Length cannot exceed 108 inches. To measure packages use the following formula: **length + 2x width + 2x height**

Step 1. Determining Length - Measure the longest side of the package, rounding to the nearest inch. This is your length.

Step 2. Determining Girth (2x Width + 2x Height). Measure the width of the package, rounding to the nearest inch. Multiply this number by 2. Measure the height of the package, rounding to the nearest inch. Multiply this number by 2. Add these two numbers together. This is your girth.

Step 3. Add the length and the girth together. This is your package measurement.

****Entries that exceed the weight and measurements indicated above will be disqualified.***

Fine Art Categories & Military Combat Experience

National Art Chairperson for the Fine Art and Military Combat Experience categories:

Nadene Stillings (OT1)

National Fine Art Chairperson
ENRM Veterans Hospital
200 Springs Road
Bedford, MA 01730

Phone: (781) 687-3199

Cell : 781-382-5996

FAX: (781) 687-3305

E-mail: Nadene.Stillings@va.gov

Fine Art Sub-Division Categories:

1. **Acrylic Painting** - The creation of original work by applying acrylic paint to a surface. The surface is not limited to canvas; it can be on wood, plaster, leather, metal, glass, etc.
2. **Oil Painting** - The creation of original work by applying oil paint, oil sticks, or oil pastels to a surface. The surface is not limited to canvas; it can be on wood, plaster, leather, metal, etc. Encaustic painting should be entered into this category.
3. **Watercolor** - The creation of work using watercolor paint. The surface is not limited to canvas; it can be on wood, plaster, leather, metal, etc.
4. **Monochromatic Drawing** - A monochromatic drawing consists of lines that use a **single** color and shades of that color that may be done using pencil, ink, charcoal, etc. Any use of additional color should be entered into colored drawing.
5. **Colored Drawing** - A colored drawing consists of lines of two or more colors and may be done using colored pencils, markers, etc.
6. **Pastels** - An art medium in the form of a stick, consisting of pure powder pigment and a binder. A pastel is usually a painting rather than drawing because the color is applied in masses rather than lines. **Note:** Oil pastels should be entered into the Oil Painting category.
7. **Sculpture** - Art created by shaping, combining, modeling or casting materials such as plastic, clay, textiles, wax or polymers into a work of art. They may be free standing or relief. **Note:** Carved sculptures should be entered into the Carving category, metal sculptures should be entered into the Metalwork category, and glass sculptures should be entered in the Glasswork category.
8. **Pyrography** - A design burned into a surface by using wood burning tools. **The design must be original.** This process is typically done on wood but can also be done on leather and other surfaces. If transfers or tracings are used, the piece must be entered in the Transfer/Engraving Art Kit category.

9. **Printmaking** - A multiple-replica (more than one copy or print) art form. It consists of an original print or proof from a master plate created through such processes as lithography, etching, woodcut, engraving, etc. Computer graphics must be entered into Digital Art category.
10. **Pottery** - A **functional** piece of fired ceramic ware (bowl, vase, pot, etc.) The form can be wheel-thrown or hand-built, not slip cast in a mold. Porcelain is included in this category. Slip cast ceramics belong in Glazed or Stained/Painted ceramics categories. Sculptural clay pieces should be entered into the Sculpture category.
11. **Black and White Photography** - A monochromatic photograph using black and white and varying shades of grey or sepia tones. Photographs must be mounted and framed. This category includes both film and digital forms of photography. Sepia and other tonal prints such as cyanotypes (blueprints) should be submitted into this category.
12. **Color Photography** - A color photograph. Photographs must be mounted and framed. This category includes both film and digital forms of photography.
13. **Digital Art** - Art that was completely created using digital technology. The work is created entirely through software or applications. All original entries must be printed, mounted and framed to qualify for this competition. It is **required** that in addition to listing the software programs or applications used, techniques must also be detailed in the “mediums/techniques used” section of the entry form. **Use of Photoshop is only allowed if the application is used to wholly create an original piece, not to modify photography. Animation and videos will be disqualified.** *Note: Digitally enhanced/edited photography should not be entered into this category. Photography that has been digitally enhanced/edited should be entered into either the Black and White Photography category or the Color Photography category.
14. **Military Combat Experience** - The medium used must be a fine art or applied art medium. Unlike the other art categories, there are NO restrictions as to when the artwork was created however entries submitted previously into this category are not eligible to compete.

To enter this category there are **four requirements**:

- **A Word document containing a typed statement/narrative** (25 to 225 words) composed by the Veteran and/or his VA staff contact person explaining how the art relates to the Veteran’s wartime experience. **Entries submitted without a write-up will not be judged.** *Judging for this category equally takes into consideration the written narrative as well as the skill involved in the artwork.*
- The Veteran must have experienced combat duty during World War II, Korean War, Vietnam, Gulf War, Grenada, Panama, Kosovo, Somalia and other recognized combats or current combat operations.
- The artwork must **relate to the Veteran’s personal experience in that war or conflict** but does not need to be a graphic representation of that combat experience.
- Consent forms 10-3203 and 10-5345 (included in this handbook) must be signed and dated by the Veteran. The staff contact person submitting the entry for the Veteran should safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.

Applied Art Categories & Group Art Category

National Art Chairperson for the Applied Art and Group Art categories:

Karen Wait (117/JB)

National Applied Art Chairperson
VA Medical Center
#1 Jefferson Barracks Drive
St. Louis, MO 63125

Phone: (314) 652-4100 x64535

E-mail: Karen.Wait@va.gov

Applied Art Sub-Division Categories:

15. **Glazed Ceramics** - Clay pieces formed by pouring slip in a mold, bisque fired, and then finished with the application of glaze(s) and fired. Entries that contain bisque pieces that are painted and/or stained, as well as glazed, are to be entered into the painted ceramic category.
16. **Stained or Painted Ceramics** - Clay pieces formed by pouring slip in a mold, fired into bisque ware and finished with the application of stains or paints. **If firing is the last step when creating your piece, the piece must be entered into Glazed Ceramics.** Ceramics using both painting and glazing techniques should be entered into the stained or painted ceramics category.
17. **Woodworking** - This refers to pieces constructed of wood that may have a **functional/useful** purpose, such as a jewelry box, a chess set, a clock, etc. **Wood lathe work or wood turning is included in this category.**
18. **Carving** - **Decorative** art achieved by carving away unwanted materials from an original piece of material. It may be relief or in the round. Material used includes stone, wood, ivory and other hard substances. **Note: Soapstone carving kits are to be included in this category.**
19. **Jewelry (not beads)** - Jewelry pieces made through casting, channeling, lost-wax, wire wrapping, etc. Jewelry incorporating beads should be entered in the Beadwork category.
20. **Crocheting/Knitting** - The use of yarn or thread and a crochet hook, knitting needles or nifty knitters to create a pattern/design and is often a useful object.
21. **Mosaic** - The art of decoration with small pieces of colored glass, tile, stone or other hard material used to create a pattern or picture. Wood intarsia and marquetry are included in this category.
22. **Collage** - An artistic collage work may include newspaper clippings, ribbons, bits of colored or hand-made papers, portions of other artwork, photographs, and such, glued to a surface. Collage is two dimensional. Scrapbooks are not allowed.

- 23. Assemblage** - A form of sculpture comprised of "found" objects arranged in such a way that they create a new piece. These objects can be anything organic or man-made. Assemblage is three dimensional. Personal collections alone (for example: coin collections, medal collections, etc.) will not be accepted. (Dioramas will not be accepted.)
- 24. Original Design in Needlework** - This includes stitchery, needlepoint, quilting, sewing a garment, soft sculpture, embroidery, cross stitch, and crewelwork, etc. These are *original designs created and completed entirely by the Veteran* that are usually worked on fabric (occasionally leather) with a needle to create a finished piece. It may be flat or three-dimensional. Pre-printed patterns on the fabric, the use of commercial patterns, charts or graphs should be entered in the Fabric Art Kit category or Needlework Kit category.
- 25. Original Design in Fiber Arts** - The use of a substance that can be separated into threadlike parts to create an **original** design in latch hook, rug punching, string art, basketry or weaving. Pre-printed patterns on the fabric, the use of commercial patterns, charts or graphs would be in the Latch Hook Kit category, Fabric Art Kit category, or Needlework Kit category.
- 26. Knotting** - Lacework made by knotting cords, thread or other fibers. Beads, shells or other decorative materials may be used. Macramé and fly tying are examples of techniques that are in the knotting category. Tatting is included in this category.
- 27. Leather Stamping** - Involves the use of shaped implements (stamps) to create an imprint onto a leather surface, often by striking the stamps with a mallet. Pre-cut leather pieces may be used. Kits are not accepted in this category. Kits that contain stamping should be entered into the Leather Kit category.
- 28. Leather Carving/Tooling** - Uses metal implements to compress moistened leather in such a way as to give a three dimensional appearance to a two dimensional surface. Pre-cut leather pieces may be used. The main tools used to "carve" leather include: Swivel knife, veiner, beveler, pear shader, seeder, cam, and backgrounder. The swivel knife is held like a pencil and dragged along the leather to outline patterns. The other tools are punch-type implements struck with a wooden or raw hide mallet. The object is to add further definition by them to the cut lines made by the swivel knife. Entries that contain both stamping and carving/tooling are to be entered into this category as well. Kits are not allowed in this category. Kits that contain leather carving/tooling should be entered into the Leather Kit category.
- 29. Metalwork** - The primary material used is metal. Tooling or punching a design or transfer, or metal assembled into a three-dimensional piece for decorative purposes are included in this category. Lathe work using metal is included in this category. Copper tooling should be entered into Transfer/Engraving Art Kit category.
- 30. Glasswork** - Glass is used as the primary medium. Examples would include stained glass, hand-blown glass, fused glass and glass etching and enameling. Commercially shaped glass items that have been painted would be in one of the Fine Arts Painting categories.

31. **Beadwork** - Beads of any kind are used to create a design. Examples would include beaded jewelry, beaded belts or other items made on a beading loom, etc.
32. **Scroll Saw/Fretwork** - Decorative open patterns cut out of wood or metal using a scroll saw and/or files.
33. **Mixed Media** - The distinct blending of two or more art techniques to create an object. The use of two or more **applied or fine arts** techniques (category types) in the creation of a single piece of art. *Entries in this category must include a description. **The types of art techniques (category types) must be identified on the entry form. Example: Painting, Sculpture, Carving.***
34. **Group Art Category** - A single art entry created by a group of Veterans. Groups in art **are not limited in number of group members**. However no more than 5 eligible invited Veterans from the first-place national competition winning entry in the Group Art category will be funded by the Festival. ***Note: Entries in this category must meet all size and weight restrictions.***

Entries in Group Art category **MUST** also include:

- **A Word document containing a typed statement/narrative** (25 to 225 words) composed by a VA staff person and/or Veteran group members explaining the creative process, goals of the group, and other helpful information. **Entries submitted without a write-up will not be judged.** *Judging for this category equally takes into consideration the typed narrative as well as the skill involved in the artwork.*
- Consent forms 10-3203 and 10-5345 (included in this handbook) must be signed and dated by the Veteran. The staff contact person submitting the entry for the Veteran should safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.

Craft Kit & Special Recognition Categories

National Art Chairperson for the Craft Kit and Special Recognition categories:

Kari Fritz (654/18)

National Craft Kit Chairperson
VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System
975 Kirman Avenue

Reno, NV 89502

Phone: (775) 785-7119

FAX: (775) 785-7003

E-mail: Kari.Fritz@va.gov

- Definition of a Kit entry: All materials needed to complete the project are supplied in the kit. Embellishments may be made to the assembled kit using non-kit items.
- Dioramas will not be accepted. Diorama definition: A model representing a SCENE with three-dimensional figures. For further clarification please contact the national art chairpersons.
- Entries containing more than one kit will be disqualified (with the exception of the combined kit category).

Craft Kit Sub-Division Categories:

- 35. Leather Kit** - A kit that comes pre-cut, pre-punched, pre-embossed and ready to finish, stain and/or lace.
- 36. Wood Building Kit** - A wood kit that has a useful function such as birdhouses, carousels, cup racks, spice shelves, etc.
- 37. Model Building (Plastic, Metal, Wood) Kit** - Snap together, glue together, or assembled plastic, metal, and/or wood model kits. (Diorama's will not be accepted. The definition of a diorama is a three-dimensional representation of a display or scene.)
- 38. String Art Kit** - A kit that uses string to establish a design. This category includes dream catcher kits and beading kits that DO NOT involve the use of a needle.
- 39. Latch Hook Kit** - A rug kit that comes in a unit with the right amount and color of yarn in the kit and the pattern already printed on the canvas.
- 40. Craft Coloring Kit** - A pre-printed design on fabric, paper, wood, canvas, rugs, etc that the Veteran fills in with colors of their choice using colored pencils, markers, paint, etc.
- 41. Figurine Painting Kit** - Pre-formed plaster, plastic, metal or wood 3 dimensional figures that the Veteran paints following a separate diagram and instructions included in the kit. There are no outlines on the piece indicating color application areas.
- 42. Paint by Number Kit** - Involves applying oil, acrylic, or watercolor paints to the outlined numbered areas.

43. **Suncatcher or Sand Art Kit** - Suncatchers involve the application of transparent glass stains on a pre-formed and outlined plastic shape. Sand art involves colored sand applied to pre-shaped adhesive areas.
44. **Fabric Art Kit** - A kit that includes the use of commercial patterns and fabric (cloth or yarn) to create a pre-printed pattern or design. Cut-n-tuck kits would be included in this category.
45. **Needlework Kit** - A kit that utilizes yarn or thread applied with a needle to plastic, cloth or canvas. Embroider kits, crewel kits, needlepoint kits, etc., are in this category. Pieces created from pre-printed designs, the use of commercial patterns and graphs qualify for this category.
Note: Beading kits that involve the use of a needle are to be included in this category.
46. **Transfer/Engraving Art Kit** - Copper tooling kits, foil scratch art kits and wood burning kits are included in this category which involves incising images, designs or patterns onto a surface by rubbing, scratching, burnishing, cutting or burning.
47. **Mosaic Kit** - A kit that uses small pieces of colored glass, plastic, tile, stone or other hard material to create a pre-printed pattern or picture. Woodscapes and Pixel Art would be included in this category.
48. **Combined Kit** - The integration of two or more **distinctly different** kits to create a **single** work of art. A collection of model cars or ornaments, etc. will not be accepted.

Special Recognition Categories

The Special Recognition category of the visual arts division is divided into two separate categories. The intent of these categories is to reinforce the concept of the arts as therapy, where an individual uses artistic expression to facilitate successful treatment outcomes. Entries and their accompanying written statement/narrative from the Veteran's VA staff contact person should focus on how the arts are used by the individual(s) to rise above severe limitations. ***Judging for this category equally takes into consideration the written narrative as well as the skill involved in the artwork.*** Entries submitted into the Art Special Recognition categories could be in the Fine Arts, Applied Arts, or Kits division and should be sent to **Kari Fritz, National Art Chairperson**.

49. **Special Recognition Physical Disability** - Entries that recognize individuals who exhibit creative expression through the visual arts while possessing significant ***physical limitations***.
50. **Special Recognition Mental Health Challenges** - Entries that recognize individuals who exhibit creative expression through the visual arts while possessing significant ***emotional or mental health challenges***.

Entries in each of the two Special Recognition categories **MUST** also include:

- **A Word document containing a typed statement/narrative** (25 to 225 words) composed by a VA staff person or the Veteran explaining why the Veteran is deserving of special recognition. **Entries submitted without a write-up will not be judged.**
- Consent forms 10-3203 and 10-5345 (included in this handbook) must be signed and dated by the Veteran. The staff contact person submitting the entry for the Veteran should safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.

Sample Art Judging Criteria

- **Creativity/Originality** – Exhibits creativity and expression in the design.
- **Skill** – Use of materials and artistry.
- **Total Presentation** – Consider the elements of art: line, space, color, form, media, texture, composition, balance, and unity. Also consider title, mounting, and framing.

Point suggestion: 1 = poor/weak, 2 = moderate, 3 = good, 4 = strong, 5 = excellent

Sample Art Judging Score Sheet

| |
|----------------------------------|
| Category Number and Name: |
| Title of Piece: |

| CRITERIA | POINTS | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|---|---|---|---|
| Creativity/Originality | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Skill | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Total Presentation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

TOTAL SCORE: _____

*Note: References to diagnosis and explanations of emotional or personal content related to the entry or Veteran should not be communicated to the judges. The exception to this rule is an entry submitted into a category that require a write-up.

How to Submit Entries to the National Competition

National Competition Entry Submission Process – New Arts4Vets App

New for 2021 – Entries will be submitted **only by VA staff** to the national level of the competition using a newly designed Arts4Vets App. The app is still in the design phase. Live training sessions will be offered to VA staff and step by step instructional handouts will be distributed in advance.

Non-VA Staff from other government Veteran medical facilities unfortunately will not have upload access to the Arts4Vets App and may continue submit entries in other ways. Please reach out to the National Director or division chairpersons to coordinate.

Veterans will not be able to submit their own entries through to the national level of competition or directly into the Arts4Vets App. They must work with the VA facility where they are enrolled and meet the local competition deadline dates.

Art Division Entry Form

Art Sub-Division:

Fine Art Categories 1-14

Applied Art

Categories 15-33

Craft Kit

Categories 35-50

**Note: Category 34-Group Art entries should use the entry form on page 29.*

| | | | |
|---|---------|--------|---------|
| Category Number and Name: | | | |
| Title of Piece: | | | |
| Veteran Name: | | | |
| Veteran E-mail: | | | |
| Veteran Phone Number: | | | |
| Size of artwork in inches: | Length: | Width: | Height: |
| <p>Describe mediums and techniques used. For craft kits, please describe enhancements and techniques used. Explanations of mediums/enhancements and techniques used will be shared with the judges during the judging process. <i>(Do not include Veteran diagnosis information as this will not be shared with the judges in this section.)</i></p> | | | |
| <p>Military Combat Experience entries - Indicate the various art types/media used to create the piece. This information is helpful to the judges during the judging process.</p> | | | |
| <p>Mixed Media category entries <u>must list</u> the two or more art types (category types) used. Example: Painting, Sculpture, Carving, etc.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>1.</div> <div>2.</div> </div> | | | |

File Name: Files uploaded to the new Arts4Vets App will automatically be renamed to coordinate with the entry data. For local competition purposes, it is suggested to name the files in a way that works best for the local staff contact person(s). Suggestion: Division-Cat.#-Title of piece-vet initials

Veterans:

By submitting artwork into the competition, you are confirming the following statement is true:

I confirm this art piece was completed entirely by me after April 1, 2020. I have read all the rules for the division in which I am entering and confirm that if my art piece is chosen as the national first-place winning entry, it will be exhibition ready when it is shipped to the Festival host site.

VA Staff Checklist:

- Veteran meets the competition eligibility criteria
- Veteran is approved to enter the NVCA Competition as a representative of this VA facility
- Veteran has signed the necessary consent forms (10-3203 and if necessary, 10-5345)

Art Division - Group Art Entry Form

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Category: | 34-Group Art |
| Title of Piece: | |
| Veteran Group Name: | |
| Number of Veterans in Group: | |

| First Name | Last Name |
|------------|-----------|
| | |
| | |
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| | |

| | | | |
|---|---------|--------|---------|
| Size of artwork in inches: | Length: | Width: | Height: |
| Describe mediums and techniques used. Explanations of mediums and techniques used will be shared with the judges during the judging process. <i>(Do not include Veteran diagnosis information as this will not be shared with the judges in this section.)</i> | | | |

File Name: Files uploaded to the new Arts4Vets App will automatically be renamed to coordinate with the entry data. For local competition purposes, it is suggested to name the files in a way that works best for the local staff contact person(s). (Example: Division and Category Number)

VA Staff Checklist:

- Veterans meet the competition eligibility criteria
- Veterans are approved to enter the NVCA Competition as representatives of this VA facility
- Veterans have signed the necessary consent forms (10-3203 and if necessary, 10-5345)
- If this entry is chosen as the national first-place entry, it will be exhibition ready when shipped to the Festival host site

EVERY VETERAN MUST SIGN FORM 10-3203 TO COMPETE IN THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL CREATIVE ARTS COMPETITIONS. The signed form should not be submitted to the Arts4Vets App for national competition judging. The signed form must be safeguarded at the Veteran's VA facility.



Department of Veterans Affairs

CONSENT FOR PRODUCTION AND USE OF VERBAL OR WRITTEN STATEMENTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, DIGITAL IMAGES, AND/OR VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDINGS BY VA

Name of individual whose statement, likeness, or voice is requested:

NOTE: The execution of this form does not authorize production or use of materials except as specified below. The specified material may be produced and used by VA for authorized purposes identified below, such as education of VA personnel, research activities, or promotional efforts. It may also be disclosed outside VA as permitted by law and as noted below. If the material is part of a VA system of records, it may be disclosed outside VA as stated in the "Routine Uses" in the "VA Privacy Act Systems of Records" published in the Federal Register.

The purpose of this form is to document your consent to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) request to obtain, produce, and/or use a verbal or written statement or a photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording containing your likeness or voice. By signing this form, you are authorizing the production or use only as specified below.

You are NOT REQUIRED TO CONSENT TO VA's REQUEST to obtain, produce, and/or use your statement, likeness, or voice. Your decision to consent or refuse will not affect your access to any present or future VA benefits for which you are eligible.

You may rescind your consent at any time prior to or during production of a photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording, or before or during your provision of a verbal or written statement. You may rescind your consent after production is complete if the burden on VA of complying with that request is not unreasonable considering the financial and administrative costs and the ease of compliance of the number of parties involved and **the Veteran's VA facility and the Dept. of VA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs & Special Events.**

The photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording will be produced while I am (describe the activity or situation) **(To Be Completed by the Department of Veteran Affairs, if applicable)**

A participant in an adaptive sport or creative arts therapy program sponsored by the Veteran's VA facility and the Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (NVSP&SE) and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Check at least one of the following (to be completed by VA)

☒ I hereby voluntarily and without compensation authorize Department of Veterans Affairs NVSP&SE and the Veteran's VA facility to produce a photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording of me (or of the above named individual if the individual is legally unable to give consent).

☒ I hereby voluntarily and without compensation authorize Department of Veterans Affairs NVSP&SE and the Veteran's VA facility to obtain or use a verbal or written statement from me (or the of the above named individual if the individual is legally unable to give consent).

I consent to allowing VA to record and use a verbal or written statement, or produce and use photographs, digital images, and video or audio recording for the purpose(s) identified below:

This product will be used: (NOTE: At least one of these boxes must be checked as well as a purpose described below) (to be completed by VA)

☒ Internally (stay within VA) ☒ Externally (shared outside VA)

Please check the applicable purpose(s) (to be completed by VA)

Promotional Efforts:

☒ Internal Publication (only VA) ☒ External publication (publicly available)

☒ Other (Specify): Newspapers, radio stations, television stations, participant profiles, souvenir program booklet and DVD, and other media outlets. In addition, VA may release this information to sponsor organizations of the National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events in the form of other media products to promote the positive aspects of creative arts therapy.

Research Activities: ☒ Study

Education Purposes:

☒ Presentation ☒ Conference ☒ Publication in a Journal ☒ Training

☐ Other (Specify):

VA ONLY Use:

☐ Performance Improvement ☐ Quality Improvement ☐ Health Care Operations

☐ Other (Specify):

☒ All of the Above

NOTE: Do not sign this form unless one or more of the boxes above has been checked.

I have read and understand the foregoing, and I consent to the use of a verbal or written statement from me, and/or of my likeness and/or voice as specified for the above-described purpose(s). I understand that no royalty, fee, or other compensation of any kind will be made to me by the United States for such use. I understand that consent to obtain, produce, and/or use a verbal or written statement, photograph, digital image, and video or audio recording containing my likeness or voice is voluntary, and my refusal will not adversely affect my access to any present or future VA benefits for which I am eligible. I further understand that I may, at any time, rescind my consent prior to or during production of a photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording. I also understand that I may rescind my consent after production is complete if the burden on VA of complying with that request is not unreasonable considering the financial and administrative costs, the ease of compliance, and the number of parties involved.

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------|
| Print Veteran Full Name (First and Last Name) | Veteran Signature | Date |
| <i>Permission Obtained By (TO BE COMPLETED BY VA)</i> Print VA Employee Full Name | Title | Date |
| <i>Signature of Person Obtaining Consent (TO BE COMPLETED BY VA)</i> Print VA Employee Full Name | VA Employee Signature | Date |

IMPORTANT: If VA is providing or releasing any patient health or demographic information with the verbal or written statement, photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording, VA Form 10-5345, Request for and Authorization to Release Medical Records or Health Information, is required prior to the release of such data to any source outside VA.

Sample Contact Sheet




Only one contact sheet needs to be submitted for ALL of the Art division entries from your facility. The Contact Sheet contains small images of each art piece and is vital in assisting the National Art Chairpersons with what is being entered from your VA facility.

You may use the Snipping Tool on your computer or a print screen/screen capture feature to copy the folder of images on your computer and paste into a Word document. Be sure to include VA staff and facility contact information and also answer the questions below on your submitted contact sheet.

Submit this contact sheet to Arts4Vets@va.gov.

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| VA Staff Contact Name: | | Routing Number: |
| Phone Number: | E-mail (Required): | |
| Facility Address: | | |
| City: | State: | Zip: |

| | |
|---|--|
| Total number of entries below: | |
| Total number of eligible Veterans listed below, counting each Veteran only once: | |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| SAMPLE  ART-01-Title-Initials ART-01-Title-Initials – 2 nd image | SAMPLE  ART-02-Title-Initials | SAMPLE  ART-03-Title-Initials |
| | | |
| | | |

Creative Writing Division Rules

VA Staff: Keep track of all Veterans who compete/enter through your VA facility and enter their information into **Local Level Participation form on page 15 of the handbook**. **Send this form to Arts4Vets@va.gov when your local competition has ended.**

Entries submitted into the Creative Writing Division will be judged based upon the merit of the original work, creative content, message clarity, use of language, originality of topic or idea, and overall strength.

All gold medal winners from the national competition in the creative writing division will be invited to attend a writing seminar at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Note: All gold, bronze, and silver creative writing winning entries will be printed in a booklet post-competition **unless otherwise indicated by the Veteran to the national chairperson, Madge Scherer by February 1.**

1. Entries in the creative writing division must have been completed after April 1, 2020.
2. **First-place ties in a category at the local competition MUST be re-judged at the local level as only one entry for each category will be accepted from each VA facility.** A formal competition is not required at the local level but is strongly encouraged. All eligible Veterans should be given the opportunity to participate regardless of degree of talent.
3. All entries submitted into the Creative Writing Division must be original compositions written solely by the eligible Veteran who is submitting the entry.
4. Entries must be submitted as Word documents in 12-point font. Do not send PDF attachments.
5. Entries must be submitted as text only. Do not send documents with pictures or graphics. Only the text of the entry will be judged.
6. Include the Veteran's name, VA facility, category, and title of the piece at the top of the Word document entry.
7. If an entry has won a gold medal in the creative writing division at the national level in any category it MAY NOT BE re-submitted into the Creative Writing division in a subsequent year.
8. Judges reserve the right to move an entry to the appropriate category or disqualify the entry if rules are not followed.
9. Collections of poems, essays, stories, etc. submitted as one entry will not be allowed.

Note: VA staff contact persons will be notified via E-mail with the competition results.

Creative Writing Categories

Madge Scherer
National Creative Writing Chairperson

Phone: (320) 252-1670 x7336
E-mail: Madge.Scherer@va.gov

1. **Poetry Rhyming** - A verse composition, **no longer than 48 lines** in length. Poetry humorous entries should be submitted into the Humor category.
2. **Poetry Non-Rhyming** - A composition, **no longer than 48 lines** in length. Poetry humorous entries should be submitted into the Humor category.
3. **Personal Essay** - A non-fiction composition based on something the writer has experienced or felt. Entries in this category **must not exceed 850 words**.
4. **Humor** - All types of works which employ humor as the primary component should be submitted in this category. **Poetry entries should be no longer than 48 lines and prose entries must not exceed 850 words.**
5. **Short, Short Story** - A short story, **no longer than 1,000 words**. The story must have a beginning, middle, and an end.
6. **Short Script** - Part of a short script for one or more characters, documenting the movement, actions, expression, and dialogue of the characters. Entries in this category **must not exceed 850 words**.
7. **Military Experience Poetry** – Poetry entries related to military experience should be submitted in this category. Entries must be **no longer than 48 lines in length**.
8. **Military Experience (not poetry)** – Entries (not poetry) related to military experience should be submitted in this category. **Entries in this category must not exceed 850 words.**
9. **Special Recognition** - Individual or group. Entries by Veterans who exhibit creative expression through use of creative writing while possessing significant physical or psychological limitations. The intent of this category is to reinforce the concept of the arts as therapy, where individuals use artistic expression to facilitate successful treatment outcomes. **Poetry entries should be no longer than 48 lines and prose entries must not exceed 850 words.**

Entries in this category **MUST** also include:

- **A Word document containing a typed statement/narrative** (25 to 225 words) composed by a VA staff person or the Veteran explaining why the Veteran is deserving of special recognition. **Entries submitted without a write-up will not be judged.**
- Consent form 10-3203 and 10-5345 (included in this handbook) must be signed and dated by the Veteran. The staff contact person submitting the entry for the Veteran should safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.

Sample Creative Writing Judging Criteria

Sample Creative Writing Judging Score Sheet

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Category Number: | Category Name: |
| Title of Entry: | |

| CRITERIA | POINTS | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Creative Content | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Message Clarity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Use of Language | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Originality of Topic or Idea | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Overall Strength of Composition | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

TOTAL SCORE _____

*Note: References to diagnosis and explanations of emotional or personal content related to the entry or Veteran will not be read or communicated to the national judges. The exception to this rule is an entry submitted into a category that require a write-up.

How to Submit Entries to the National Competition

National Competition Entry Submission Process – New Arts4Vets App

New for 2021 – Entries will be submitted **only by VA staff** to the national level of the competition using a newly designed Arts4Vets App. The app is still in the design phase. Live training sessions will be offered to VA staff and step by step instructional handouts will be distributed in advance.

Non-VA Staff from other government Veteran medical facilities unfortunately will not have upload access to the Arts4Vets App and may continue to submit entries in other ways. Please reach out to the National Director or division chairpersons to coordinate.

Veterans will not be able to submit their own entries through to the national level of competition or directly into the Arts4Vets App. They must work with the VA facility where they are enrolled and meet the local competition deadline dates.

Creative Writing Division Entry Form

VA Staff: Obtain additional Veteran contact information to notify Veteran(s) of the competition results.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Category Number and Name: | |
| Title of Piece: | |
| Line Count/Word Count: | |

Individual Entry – For entries submitted by one Veteran.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Veteran Name: | |
| Veteran E-mail: | |

Group Entry – For an entry submitted by a group of Veterans into the Special Recognition category.

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Group Name: | |
| Number of Veterans in Group: | |

Group Members:

| First Name | Last Name |
|------------|-----------|
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| | |

File Name: Files uploaded to the new Arts4Vets App will automatically be renamed to coordinate with the entry data. For local competition purposes, it is suggested to name the files in a way that works best for the local staff contact person(s). Suggestion: Division-Cat.#-Title of piece-vet initials

Veterans: By submitting entries into the competition, you are confirming the following statement is true:

I confirm this piece was completed entirely by me after April 1, 2020. I have read all the rules for the division in which I am entering.

VA Staff Checklist:

- Veteran meets the competition eligibility criteria
- Veteran is approved to enter the NVCA Competition as a representative of this VA facility
- Veteran has signed the necessary consent forms (10-3203 and if necessary, 10-5345)

EVERY VETERAN MUST SIGN FORM 10-3203 TO COMPETE IN THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL CREATIVE ARTS COMPETITIONS. The signed form should not be submitted to the Arts4Vets App for national competition judging. The signed form must be safeguarded at the Veteran's VA facility.



Department of Veterans Affairs

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You may rescind your consent at any time prior to or during production of a photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording, or before or during your provision of a verbal or written statement. You may rescind your consent after production is complete if the burden on VA of complying with that request is not unreasonable considering the financial and administrative costs and the ease of compliance of the number of parties involved and **the Veteran's VA facility and the Dept. of VA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs & Special Events.**

The photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording will be produced while I am (describe the activity or situation) **(To Be Completed by the Department of Veteran Affairs, if applicable)**

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☒ Internal Publication (only VA) ☒ External publication (publicly available)

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Research Activities: ☒ Study

Education Purposes:

☒ Presentation ☒ Conference ☒ Publication in a Journal ☒ Training

☐ Other (Specify):

VA ONLY Use:

☐ Performance Improvement ☐ Quality Improvement ☐ Health Care Operations

☐ Other (Specify):

☒ All of the Above

NOTE: Do not sign this form unless one or more of the boxes above has been checked.

I have read and understand the foregoing, and I consent to the use of a verbal or written statement from me, and/or of my likeness and/or voice as specified for the above-described purpose(s). I understand that no royalty, fee, or other compensation of any kind will be made to me by the United States for such use. I understand that consent to obtain, produce, and/or use a verbal or written statement, photograph, digital image, and video or audio recording containing my likeness or voice is voluntary, and my refusal will not adversely affect my access to any present or future VA benefits for which I am eligible. I further understand that I may, at any time, rescind my consent prior to or during production of a photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording. I also understand that I may rescind my consent after production is complete if the burden on VA of complying with that request is not unreasonable considering the financial and administrative costs, the ease of compliance, and the number of parties involved.

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------|
| Print Veteran Full Name (First and Last Name) | Veteran Signature | Date |
| <i>Permission Obtained By (TO BE COMPLETED BY VA)</i> Print VA Employee Full Name | Title | Date |
| <i>Signature of Person Obtaining Consent (TO BE COMPLETED BY VA)</i> Print VA Employee Full Name | VA Employee Signature | Date |

IMPORTANT: If VA is providing or releasing any patient health or demographic information with the verbal or written statement, photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording, VA Form 10-5345, Request for and Authorization to Release Medical Records or Health Information, is required prior to the release of such data to any source outside VA.

Dance Division Rules

VA Staff: Keep track of all Veterans who compete/enter through your VA facility and enter their information into **Local Level Participation form on page 15 of the handbook**. **Send this form to Arts4Vets@va.gov when your local competition has ended.**

All gold medal winners in the dance, drama and music divisions at the national level of competition will be invited to attend and participate as chorus members in the live stage show performance at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Note: Not all first-place winners will be asked to perform their entry in the show. Due to time constraints, the Festival show directors will choose approximately 25 dance, drama, and music gold medal entries to perform. The remaining gold medalists will be invited to make up the Festival chorus.

1. First-place ties in a category at the local competition **MUST** be re-judged at the local level as only one entry for each category will be accepted from each VA facility.
2. All entries in the dance, drama and music divisions must be recorded after April 1, 2020.
3. Suggested length of performance - no longer than three minutes.
4. Judges reserve the right to move an entry to the appropriate category or disqualify the entry if rules are not followed.
5. Dance entries will be judged based on the style of dance and steps incorporated in the performance as opposed to the style/genre of music selected.
6. Whole-body (head to toe) video recording for dance entries is necessary. Video recording can include close-ups of the body and/or feet but whole-body view should be included as well.
7. It is considered a solo when one Veteran dances with a non-Veteran partner.
8. **Entries MAY NOT be expanded with non-eligible Veterans or any other individual unless it is a partner dance where the partner is necessary to perform the dance movements.** It should be noted that although the National Veterans Creative Arts Program recognizes the therapeutic value of participation of staff, volunteers and ineligible Veterans in groups, it is essential in keeping with the fairness of the competition that **only eligible Veterans** are competing against each other.
9. **CD audio tracks** of the dance division entries are **NOT required to be sent to the dance chairperson**. However, should the entry place first in the national competition and the Veteran(s) be invited to perform their entry in the Festival stage show, the CD audio track must be sent to the dance division chairperson.
10. **TITLE PAGE** – Each entry must have a title page displayed prior to the entry being shown. The title page should include the Category and the Title of the Entry. The title page can be inserted during the editing process or it can be done manually prior to the taping. It is acceptable to hold up a handwritten sign that states the category and title of piece.

Tips for Taking Better Video Recordings

Please take a few extra minutes preparing a video correctly to give your Veteran the best chance possible during the judging process and to save hours of time with the judging process for our judges who donate their time.

- **Be sure to check that all videos play with video and audio before submission.**
- **Focus on the performer**, not the accompanists. Avoid taping from the back of the room. Stage presence cannot be judged if you cannot clearly see the performer.
- When video recording dance acts, it is necessary to include the whole-body in the entire recording, including the feet.
- **Sound control** is important! Clear audio makes a performance much easier (and enjoyable) to judge. Make sure your sound is good and balanced. Be aware of the background/accompaniment being too loud. Oftentimes we see/hear the speaker/player is next to the video camera and it is difficult to hear the performer.
- Consider holding your local competition and then video recording **ONLY** the first-place acts that will be sent forward for national judging.
- **Dance, drama, and music entries** will be accepted (MP4, WMV, MOV) through the Arts4Vets App or via CDs. **If submitting entries on CDs, A SEPARATE CD MUST BE SUBMITTED FOR EACH ENTRY IN EACH CATEGORY. More than one entry on a CD will not be accepted.**
- **TITLE PAGE** – Each entry must have a title page displayed prior to the entry being shown. The title page should include the Category and the Title of the Entry. The title page can be inserted during the editing process or it can be done manually prior to the taping. It is acceptable to hold up a handwritten sign that states the category and title of piece.
- Label your CDs with the **city and state of your VA facility**. Also include the **division entering and category number**.
- Be sure to make a copy of your final CDs for your own file/library in the event of lost or damage. **CDs will be destroyed post-judging and will not be returned.**

Dance Categories

Natalie Cole (116RT)
National Dance Chairperson
VA Healthcare System
1201 NW 16th Street
Miami, FL 33125

Phone: (305) 575-7000 x6740
Cell: (786) 831-0131
E-mail: Natalie.Cole@va.gov

All categories are inclusive for Veterans who are ambulatory or use any assistive devices for movement (i.e. wheelchair, crutches, walkers, etc.).

1. **Ballroom** - Solo or Group. Pattern of movement in a choreographed routine. Structured ballroom dances such as the waltz, jitterbug/swing, hustle, disco, polka, lindy hop, fox-trot, quick step. Veteran(s) should maintain physical contact with partner for greater part of dance.
2. **Latin Ballroom** - Solo or Group. Latin style structured ballroom dances such as samba, cha-cha, salsa, Meringue, Machida, rumba, tango, etc. Veteran(s) should maintain physical contact with partner for greater part of dance.
3. **Country/Western/Folk/Ethnic/Cultural** - Solo or Group. Country/western dances such as: Two Step, Waltz, Cowboy or Traveling Cha Cha, Polka, Schottische, promenade dances, East Coast Swing, West Coast Swing, Line Dance, Square Dance. Choreographed wheelchair dances associated with various cultures or countries. Examples may include: Clogging, Jewish Hora, Jig, May Pole, Mexican Hat, etc.
4. **Modern/Contemporary** – Solo or group. Expressive dance that combines elements of several dance genres including modern, jazz, lyrical, and classical ballet. Contemporary dance stresses versatility and improvisation.
5. **Tap, Jazz or Ballet** - Solo or Group. Traditional tap, jazz, or ballet patterns of movement choreographed to music in a routine.
6. **Line Dance** - Set pattern of movements where the individuals end up facing 2 or 4 walls. Suggest a minimum number of 3 to form the line. **All group members must be Veterans unless the line dance requires a partner where the partner is necessary to perform the dance.**
7. **Interpretive Movement** - Solo or Group. The movements tell a story or interpret feelings through hand movements or gestures. Wheelchair does not need to move. Examples may include sign language or other hand movement and dance meditation. Stretching to music does not qualify entry into this category.
8. **Freestyle/Hip-Hop** - Solo or Group. Non-choreographed/non-patterned movements that can involve any style of dance. Movements are spontaneous/improvisational. Entries into this category may contain many diverse steps and movements allowing dancers to use freedom of expression to enhance their dance style. Example: Freestyle, hip-hop, etc.

9. **Novelty** - Solo or Group. A routine consisting of original, imaginative, or innovative dance movements that incorporate a theme concept or characterization throughout the entire performance.

10. **Special Recognition** - Solo or Group. Wheelchair or ambulatory. Entries that recognize individuals who exhibit creative expression through the use of dance while possessing significant physical or psychological limitations. The intent of this category is to reinforce the concept of the arts as therapy, where an individual uses artistic expression to facilitate successful treatment outcomes.

Entries in this category **MUST** also include:

- **A written statement/narrative** (25 to 225 words) by a VA staff person or the Veteran of why the Veteran is deserving of special recognition
- Consent form 10-3203 and 10-5345 (included in this handbook) must be signed and dated by the Veteran. The staff contact person submitting the entry for the Veteran should safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.

Sample Dance Judging Criteria

- **Technical Skills** - body placement, quality of movements
- **Musicality** - rhythm, timing/phrasing, movement related to music
- **Stage Presence** - confidence, focus, artistic expression, mastery of choreography

Sample Dance Judging Score Sheet

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Category Number: | Category Name: |
| Title of Entry: | |

| CRITERIA | POINTS | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Technical Skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Musicality | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Stage Presence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

TOTAL SCORE _____

*Note: References to diagnosis and explanations of emotional or personal content related to the entry or Veteran will not be read or communicated to the national judges. The exception to this rule is an entry submitted into a category that require a write-up.

How to Submit Entries to the National Competition

National Competition Entry Submission Process – New Arts4Vets App

New for 2021 – Entries will be submitted **only by VA staff** to the national level of the competition using a newly designed Arts4Vets App. The app is still in the design phase. Live training sessions will be offered to VA staff and step by step instructional handouts will be distributed in advance.

Non-VA Staff from other government Veteran medical facilities unfortunately will not have upload access to the Arts4Vets App and may continue to submit entries in other ways. Please reach out to the National Director or division chairpersons to coordinate.

Veterans will not be able to submit their own entries through to the national level of competition or directly into the Arts4Vets App. They must work with the VA facility where they are enrolled and meet the local competition deadline dates.

Dance Division Entry Form

VA Staff: Obtain additional Veteran contact information to notify Veteran(s) of the competition results.

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Category Number and Name: | |
| Title of Entry: | |
| Title of Music Selection <i>(if different from Title of Entry)</i> : | |
| Non-Veteran dance partner name(s): | |
| Was the entry choreographed by the Veteran? | YES or NO |

Solo Entry

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Veteran Name: | |
| Veteran E-mail: | |

Group Entry

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Group Name: | |
| Number of Veterans in Group: | |

Group Members

| First Name | Last Name |
|------------|-----------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

File Name: Files uploaded to the new Arts4Vets App will automatically be renamed to coordinate with the entry data. For local competition purposes, it is suggested to name the files in a way that works best for the local staff contact person(s). Suggestion: Division-Cat.#-Title of piece-vet initials

Veterans - By submitting entries into the competition, you are confirming the following statement is true:

I/we have read all the rules for the division in which I/we am/are entering. If my/our entry places first at the national level, I/we understand that I/we will be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. It is required that I/we attend and participate in rehearsals for the entire Festival week concluding with the stage show performance.

VA Staff Checklist:

- Veteran meets the competition eligibility criteria
- Veteran is approved to enter the NVCA Competition as a representative of this VA facility
- Veteran has signed the necessary consent forms (10-3203 and if necessary, 10-5345)

EVERY VETERAN MUST SIGN FORM 10-3203 TO COMPETE IN THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL CREATIVE ARTS COMPETITIONS. The signed form should not be submitted to the Arts4Vets App for national competition judging. The signed form must be safeguarded at the Veteran's VA facility.



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Name of individual whose statement, likeness, or voice is requested:

NOTE: The execution of this form does not authorize production or use of materials except as specified below. The specified material may be produced and used by VA for authorized purposes identified below, such as education of VA personnel, research activities, or promotional efforts. It may also be disclosed outside VA as permitted by law and as noted below. If the material is part of a VA system of records, it may be disclosed outside VA as stated in the "Routine Uses" in the "VA Privacy Act Systems of Records" published in the Federal Register.

The purpose of this form is to document your consent to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) request to obtain, produce, and/or use a verbal or written statement or a photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording containing your likeness or voice. By signing this form, you are authorizing the production or use only as specified below.

You are NOT REQUIRED TO CONSENT TO VA's REQUEST to obtain, produce, and/or use your statement, likeness, or voice. Your decision to consent or refuse will not affect your access to any present or future VA benefits for which you are eligible.

You may rescind your consent at any time prior to or during production of a photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording, or before or during your provision of a verbal or written statement. You may rescind your consent after production is complete if the burden on VA of complying with that request is not unreasonable considering the financial and administrative costs and the ease of compliance of the number of parties involved and **the Veteran's VA facility and the Dept. of VA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs & Special Events.**

The photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording will be produced while I am (describe the activity or situation) **(To Be Completed by the Department of Veteran Affairs, if applicable)**

A participant in an adaptive sport or creative arts therapy program sponsored by the Veteran's VA facility and the Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (NVSP&SE) and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Check at least one of the following (to be completed by VA)

☒ I hereby voluntarily and without compensation authorize Department of Veterans Affairs NVSP&SE and the Veteran's VA facility to produce a photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording of me (or of the above named individual if the individual is legally unable to give consent).

☒ I hereby voluntarily and without compensation authorize Department of Veterans Affairs NVSP&SE and the Veteran's VA facility to obtain or use a verbal or written statement from me (or the of the above named individual if the individual is legally unable to give consent).

I consent to allowing VA to record and use a verbal or written statement, or produce and use photographs, digital images, and video or audio recording for the purpose(s) identified below:

This product will be used: (NOTE: At least one of these boxes must be checked as well as a purpose described below) (to be completed by VA)

☒ Internally (stay within VA) ☒ Externally (shared outside VA)

Please check the applicable purpose(s) (to be completed by VA)

Promotional Efforts:

☒ Internal Publication (only VA) ☒ External publication (publicly available)

☒ Other (Specify): Newspapers, radio stations, television stations, participant profiles, souvenir program booklet and DVD, and other media outlets. In addition, VA may release this information to sponsor organizations of the National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events in the form of other media products to promote the positive aspects of creative arts therapy.

Research Activities: ☒ Study

Education Purposes:

☒ Presentation ☒ Conference ☒ Publication in a Journal ☒ Training

☐ Other (Specify):

VA ONLY Use:

☐ Performance Improvement ☐ Quality Improvement ☐ Health Care Operations

☐ Other (Specify):

☒ All of the Above

NOTE: Do not sign this form unless one or more of the boxes above has been checked.

I have read and understand the foregoing, and I consent to the use of a verbal or written statement from me, and/or of my likeness and/or voice as specified for the above-described purpose(s). I understand that no royalty, fee, or other compensation of any kind will be made to me by the United States for such use. I understand that consent to obtain, produce, and/or use a verbal or written statement, photograph, digital image, and video or audio recording containing my likeness or voice is voluntary, and my refusal will not adversely affect my access to any present or future VA benefits for which I am eligible. I further understand that I may, at any time, rescind my consent prior to or during production of a photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording. I also understand that I may rescind my consent after production is complete if the burden on VA of complying with that request is not unreasonable considering the financial and administrative costs, the ease of compliance, and the number of parties involved.

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------|
| Print Veteran Full Name (First and Last Name) | Veteran Signature | Date |
| <i>Permission Obtained By (TO BE COMPLETED BY VA)</i> Print VA Employee Full Name | Title | Date |
| <i>Signature of Person Obtaining Consent (TO BE COMPLETED BY VA)</i> Print VA Employee Full Name | VA Employee Signature | Date |

IMPORTANT: If VA is providing or releasing any patient health or demographic information with the verbal or written statement, photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording, VA Form 10-5345, Request for and Authorization to Release Medical Records or Health Information, is required prior to the release of such data to any source outside VA.

Drama Division Rules

VA Staff: Keep track of all Veterans who compete/enter through your VA facility and enter their information into **Local Level Participation form on page 15 of the handbook**. **Send this form to Arts4Vets@va.gov when your local competition has ended.**

All gold medal winners in the dance, drama and music divisions at the national level of competition will be invited to attend and participate as chorus members in the live stage show performance at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Note: Not all first-place winners will be asked to perform their entry in the show. Due to time constraints, the Festival show directors will choose approximately 25 dance, drama, and music gold medal entries to perform. The remaining gold medalists will be invited to make up the Festival chorus.

Veterans who wish to have their original work judged by **performance criteria** (stage presence, expressiveness and interpretation) should submit the entry into the **DRAMA** division in one of the categories below that best fits the entry. Veterans who wish to have their **original work** judged by criteria based upon the **merit of the composition** (creative content, message clarity, use of language, and originality of topic or idea) should submit the entry into the **CREATIVE WRITING** division.

1. First-place ties in a category at the local competition **MUST** be re-judged at the local level as only one entry for each category will be accepted from each VA facility.
2. All entries in the dance, drama and music divisions must be recorded after April 1, 2020.
3. Suggested length of performance - no longer than three minutes.
4. Judges reserve the right to move an entry to the appropriate category or disqualify the entry if rules are not followed.
5. The **addition of staff, volunteer(s), and/or Veterans who are not eligible Veterans to any entry will result in disqualification**. However, if a drama entry requires a female character and no eligible female Veterans are available, the part may be read by a female volunteer or staff member. *It should be noted that although the National Veterans Creative Arts Program recognizes the therapeutic value of participation of staff, volunteers and ineligible Veterans in groups, it is essential in keeping with the fairness of the competition that **only eligible Veterans** are competing against each other.*
6. All Veterans must contribute significantly to the presentation in a dramatic way and be seen on the video for an entry to be submitted into a group category.
7. **TITLE PAGE** – Each entry must have a title page displayed prior to the entry being shown. The title page should include the Category and the Title of the Entry. The title page can be inserted during the editing process or it can be done manually prior to the taping. It is acceptable to hold up a handwritten sign that states the category and title of piece.

Note: VA staff contact persons will be notified via E-mail with the competition results.

Tips for Taking Better Video Recordings

Please take a few extra minutes preparing a video correctly to give your Veteran the best chance possible during the judging process and to save hours of time with the judging process for our judges who donate their time.

- **Be sure to check that all videos play with video and audio before submission.**
- **Focus on the performer**, not the accompanists. Avoid taping from the back of the room. Stage presence cannot be judged if you cannot clearly see the performer.
- When video recording dance acts, it is necessary to include the whole-body in the entire recording, including the feet.
- **Sound control** is important! Clear audio makes a performance much easier (and enjoyable) to judge. Make sure your sound is good and balanced. Be aware of the background/accompaniment being too loud. Oftentimes we see/hear the speaker/player is next to the video camera and it is difficult to hear the performer.
- Consider holding your local competition and then video recording **ONLY** the first-place acts that will be sent forward for national judging.
- **Dance, drama, and music entries** will be accepted digitally (MP4, WMV, MOV) through the Arts4Vets App or via CDs. **If submitting entries on CDs, A SEPARATE CD MUST BE SUBMITTED FOR EACH ENTRY IN EACH CATEGORY. More than one entry on a CD will not be accepted.**
- **TITLE PAGE** – Each entry must have a title page displayed prior to the entry being shown. The title page should include the Category and the Title of the Entry. The title page can be inserted during the editing process or it can be done manually prior to the taping. It is acceptable to hold up a handwritten sign that states the category and title of piece.
- Label your CDs with the **city and state of your VA facility**. Also include the **division entering and category number**.
- Be sure to make a copy of your final CDs for your own file/library in the event of lost or damage. **CDs will be destroyed post-judging and will not be returned.**

Drama Categories

Dana Castanier (122TR)
National Drama Chairperson
VA Medical Center
5500 Armstrong Road
Battle Creek, MI 49037

Phone: (269) 966-5600 x33933
FAX: (269) 223-6101
E-mail: Dana.Castanier@va.gov

1. **Dramatic Prose** - Solo or group. A composition in ordinary speech or writing (not poetry). For example: a reading or excerpt from a speech.
2. **Patriotic Prose** - Solo or group. A composition in ordinary speech or writing (not poetry) with content that relates to American patriotism.
3. **Inspirational Prose** - Solo or group. A composition in ordinary speech or writing (not poetry) with content that is of spiritual nature.
4. **Comedy Prose** - Solo or group. Any drama of light and amusing character.
5. **Dramatic Poetry** - Solo or group. A verse composition.
6. **Patriotic Poetry** - Solo or group. A verse composition with content that relates to American patriotism.
7. **Inspirational Poetry** - Solo or group. A verse composition with content that is of an inspirational nature.
8. **Comedy Poetry** - Solo or group. A verse composition of light and amusing character.
9. **Interpretive Performance-Dramatic** - Solo or group. A presentation that involves acting, movement, and props.
10. **Interpretive Performance-Novelty** - Solo or group. A presentation that is of light and amusing character involving acting, movement and props. Mime, juggling, magic, puppetry and ventriloquism should be submitted into this category.
11. **Multimedia Video** - Solo or group. An artistic presentation of a theme or topic approximately three minutes in length that is created, directed and edited completely by an eligible Veteran or Veterans. The video must contain a combination of **three** or more of the following: photography (original images only), graphics, videography, music, sound effects, animation, spoken dialog and/or narration. Judging criteria for this category includes: Structure and Organization; Originality and Creativity; Total Presentation.

12. Special Recognition - Solo or group. Existing or original. **All specific category rules still apply when entering the special recognition category.** Entries that recognize individuals who exhibit creative expression through the use of drama while possessing significant physical or psychological limitations. The intent of this category is to reinforce the concept of the arts as therapy, where an individual uses artistic expression to facilitate successful treatment outcomes. ***Multimedia entries are not allowed in this category.***

Entries in this category **MUST** also include:

- **A Word document containing a typed statement/narrative** (25 to 225 words) composed by a VA staff person or the Veteran explaining why the Veteran is deserving of special recognition. **Entries submitted without a write-up will not be judged.**
- Consent form 10-3203 and 10-5345 (included in this handbook) must be signed and dated by the Veteran. The staff contact person submitting the entry for the Veteran should safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.

Sample Drama Judging Criteria

Sample Drama Judging Score Sheet

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Category Number: | Category Name: |
| Title of Entry: | |

| CRITERIA | POINTS | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Stage Presence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Expressiveness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Creativity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Interpretation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

TOTAL SCORE _____

Multimedia Video

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Structure & Organization | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Originality & Creativity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Total Presentation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

TOTAL SCORE _____

*Note: References to diagnosis and explanations of emotional or personal content related to the entry or Veteran will not be read or communicated to the national judges. The exception to this rule is an entry submitted into a category that require a write-up.

How to Submit Entries to the National Competition

National Competition Entry Submission Process – New Arts4Vets App

New for 2021 – Entries will be submitted **only by VA staff** to the national level of the competition using a newly designed Arts4Vets App. The app is still in the design phase. Live training sessions will be offered to VA staff and step by step instructional handouts will be distributed in advance.

Non-VA Staff from other government Veteran medical facilities unfortunately will not have upload access to the Arts4Vets App and may continue to submit entries in other ways. Please reach out to the National Director or division chairpersons to coordinate.

Veterans will not be able to submit their own entries through to the national level of competition or directly into the Arts4Vets App. They must work with the VA facility where they are enrolled and meet the local competition deadline dates.

Drama Division Entry Form

Multimedia Video entries must use the entry form on page 53.

VA Staff: Obtain additional Veteran contact information to notify Veteran(s) of the competition results.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Category Number and Name: | |
| Title of Entry: | |
| Was the entry written by the Veteran? | YES or NO |

Solo Entry

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Veteran Name: | |
| Veteran E-mail: | |

Group Entry

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Group Name: | |
| Number of Veterans in Group: | |

Group Members

| First Name | Last Name |
|------------|-----------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

File Name: Files uploaded to the new Arts4Vets App will automatically be renamed to coordinate with the entry data. For local competition purposes, it is suggested to name the files in a way that works best for the local staff contact person(s). Suggestion: Division-Cat.#-Title of piece-vet initials

Veterans: By submitting entries into the competition, you are confirming the following statement is true:

I/we have read all the rules for the division in which I/we am/are entering. If my/our entry places first at the national level, I/we understand that I/we will be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. It is required that I/we attend and participate in rehearsals for the entire Festival week concluding with the stage show performance.

VA Staff Checklist:

- Veteran meets the competition eligibility criteria
- Veteran is approved to enter the NVCA Competition as a representative of this VA facility
- Veteran has signed the necessary consent forms (10-3203 and if necessary, 10-5345)

Drama Division - Multimedia Video Entry Form

VA Staff: Obtain additional Veteran contact information to notify Veteran(s) of the competition results.

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Category Number and Name: | 11-MULTIMEDIA VIDEO |
| Title of Entry: | |

Solo Entry

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Veteran Name: | |
| Veteran E-mail: | |

Group Entry

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Group Name: | |
| Number of Veterans in Group: | |
| Indicate Veteran First and Last Name: | |

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Identify the various tasks the Veteran(s) was/were responsible for in creating this entry: | |
| Photographed: | Videotaped: |
| Graphics: | Acted/Spoke: |
| Selected Music: | Wrote Narration: |
| Edited Video: | Sang/Played Instrument(s): |
| Other (please describe): | |

VIDEO CONTENT

If using photos or video in the multimedia presentation, they must be original photos and original videos taken by the Veteran(s) or public domain. If the source is public domain, cite the source:

Public domain sources:

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

File Name: Files uploaded to the new Arts4Vets App will automatically be renamed to coordinate with the entry data. For local competition purposes, it is suggested to name the files in a way that works best for the local staff contact person(s). Suggestion: Division-Cat.#-Title of piece-vet initials

Veterans - By submitting entries into the competition, you are confirming the following statement is true: I/we have read all the rules for the division in which I/we am/are entering. If my/our entry places first at the national level, I/we understand that I/we will be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. It is required that I/we attend and participate in rehearsals for the entire Festival week concluding with the stage show performance.

EVERY VETERAN MUST SIGN FORM 10-3203 TO COMPETE IN THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL CREATIVE ARTS COMPETITIONS. The signed form should not be submitted to the Arts4Vets App for national competition judging. The signed form must be safeguarded at the Veteran's VA facility.



Department of Veterans Affairs

CONSENT FOR PRODUCTION AND USE OF VERBAL OR WRITTEN STATEMENTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, DIGITAL IMAGES, AND/OR VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDINGS BY VA

Name of individual whose statement, likeness, or voice is requested:

NOTE: The execution of this form does not authorize production or use of materials except as specified below. The specified material may be produced and used by VA for authorized purposes identified below, such as education of VA personnel, research activities, or promotional efforts. It may also be disclosed outside VA as permitted by law and as noted below. If the material is part of a VA system of records, it may be disclosed outside VA as stated in the "Routine Uses" in the "VA Privacy Act Systems of Records" published in the Federal Register.

The purpose of this form is to document your consent to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) request to obtain, produce, and/or use a verbal or written statement or a photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording containing your likeness or voice. By signing this form, you are authorizing the production or use only as specified below.

You are NOT REQUIRED TO CONSENT TO VA's REQUEST to obtain, produce, and/or use your statement, likeness, or voice. Your decision to consent or refuse will not affect your access to any present or future VA benefits for which you are eligible.

You may rescind your consent at any time prior to or during production of a photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording, or before or during your provision of a verbal or written statement. You may rescind your consent after production is complete if the burden on VA of complying with that request is not unreasonable considering the financial and administrative costs and the ease of compliance of the number of parties involved and **the Veteran's VA facility and the Dept. of VA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs & Special Events.**

The photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording will be produced while I am (describe the activity or situation) **(To Be Completed by the Department of Veteran Affairs, if applicable)**

A participant in an adaptive sport or creative arts therapy program sponsored by the Veteran's VA facility and the Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (NVSP&SE) and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Check at least one of the following (to be completed by VA)

☒ I hereby voluntarily and without compensation authorize Department of Veterans Affairs NVSP&SE and the Veteran's VA facility to produce a photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording of me (or of the above named individual if the individual is legally unable to give consent).

☒ I hereby voluntarily and without compensation authorize Department of Veterans Affairs NVSP&SE and the Veteran's VA facility to obtain or use a verbal or written statement from me (or the of the above named individual if the individual is legally unable to give consent).

I consent to allowing VA to record and use a verbal or written statement, or produce and use photographs, digital images, and video or audio recording for the purpose(s) identified below:

This product will be used: (NOTE: At least one of these boxes must be checked as well as a purpose described below) (to be completed by VA)

☒ Internally (stay within VA) ☒ Externally (shared outside VA)

Please check the applicable purpose(s) (to be completed by VA)

Promotional Efforts:

☒ Internal Publication (only VA) ☒ External publication (publicly available)

☒ Other (Specify): Newspapers, radio stations, television stations, participant profiles, souvenir program booklet and DVD, and other media outlets. In addition, VA may release this information to sponsor organizations of the National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events in the form of other media products to promote the positive aspects of creative arts therapy.

Research Activities: ☒ Study

Education Purposes:

☒ Presentation ☒ Conference ☒ Publication in a Journal ☒ Training

☐ Other (Specify):

VA ONLY Use:

☐ Performance Improvement ☐ Quality Improvement ☐ Health Care Operations

☐ Other (Specify):

☒ All of the Above

NOTE: Do not sign this form unless one or more of the boxes above has been checked.

I have read and understand the foregoing, and I consent to the use of a verbal or written statement from me, and/or of my likeness and/or voice as specified for the above-described purpose(s). I understand that no royalty, fee, or other compensation of any kind will be made to me by the United States for such use. I understand that consent to obtain, produce, and/or use a verbal or written statement, photograph, digital image, and video or audio recording containing my likeness or voice is voluntary, and my refusal will not adversely affect my access to any present or future VA benefits for which I am eligible. I further understand that I may, at any time, rescind my consent prior to or during production of a photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording. I also understand that I may rescind my consent after production is complete if the burden on VA of complying with that request is not unreasonable considering the financial and administrative costs, the ease of compliance, and the number of parties involved.

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------|
| Print Veteran Full Name (First and Last Name) | Veteran Signature | Date |
| <i>Permission Obtained By (TO BE COMPLETED BY VA)</i> Print VA Employee Full Name | Title | Date |
| <i>Signature of Person Obtaining Consent (TO BE COMPLETED BY VA)</i> Print VA Employee Full Name | VA Employee Signature | Date |

IMPORTANT: If VA is providing or releasing any patient health or demographic information with the verbal or written statement, photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording, VA Form 10-5345, Request for and Authorization to Release Medical Records or Health Information, is required prior to the release of such data to any source outside VA.

INTENTIONALLY BLANK PAGE

Music Division Rules

VA Staff: Keep track of all Veterans who compete/enter through your VA facility and enter their information into **Local Level Participation form on page 15 of the handbook**. **Send this form to Arts4Vets@va.gov when your local competition has ended.**

All gold medal winners in the dance, drama and music divisions at the national level of competition will be invited to attend and participate as chorus members in the live stage show performance at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Note: Not all first-place winners will be asked to perform their entry in the show. Due to time constraints, the Festival show directors will choose approximately 25 dance, drama, and music gold medal entries to perform. The remaining gold medalists will be invited to make up the Festival chorus.

1. First-place ties in a category at the local competition **MUST** be re-judged at the local level as only one entry for each category will be accepted from each VA facility.
2. All entries in the dance, drama and music divisions must be recorded after April 1, 2020.
3. Suggested length of performance - no longer than three minutes.
4. Judges reserve the right to move an entry to the appropriate category or disqualify the entry if rules are not followed.
5. Music entries must be recorded live. No voice-over dubbing will be allowed. No lip syncing to a pre-recorded track will be allowed.
6. A medley of songs in an entry must be continuous/overlapping. Editing videos or starting/stopping songs to combine multiple songs as one entry will not be allowed.
7. Once an entry has placed first in the music division at the national level of competition, it is not eligible to be entered again. (Example: If a Veteran or group places first with a music selection in a category one year at the national level, the Veteran or group may not enter that specific music selection again in the competition but he may enter that category again with a different music selection.) Music entries that have not placed first at the national level of competition should not be entered more than two consecutive years.
8. No restrictions or qualifications shall be placed on accompanists for musicians. However, **accompanists may only accompany and not take instrumental leads or solos**. There is no limit in the number of accompanists that may be utilized in an entry as long as they are only accompanying. A band of musicians may accompany a vocal solo, vocal group, instrumental solo or instrumental group. (Example: An instrumental group entry may consist of eligible Veterans taking leads on saxophone, trumpet and guitar accompanied by non-lead taking VA staff or volunteers on piano, drums and bass.)

9. An original composition may be placed in categories other than original. **It is required that original vocal entries also submit the typed lyrics along with their entry paperwork.**
10. The **addition of staff, volunteer(s), and/or Veterans who are not eligible Veterans to any entry other than as accompanists will result in disqualification.** It should be noted that although the National Veterans Creative Arts Program recognizes the therapeutic value of participation of staff, volunteers and ineligible Veterans in groups, it is essential in keeping with the fairness of the competition that **only eligible Veterans** are competing against each other.
11. Only one voice may be present to be considered a solo. Once a second voice is added the **entry becomes a group entry and singers must meet eligibility requirements.** If back-up voices are present, they must be eligible Veteran inpatients or outpatients and their inclusion would make the entry a **Vocal Group**. Back-up singing by staff, volunteers, ineligible Veterans or karaoke will result in disqualification. Karaoke tapes must not include back-up singing but must be instrumental accompaniment only. **Back-up tracks that have the Veteran's voice dubbed in, vocalizers, and harmonizers are not allowed.**
12. The presence of any vocalizations in an instrumental entry will eliminate that entry from competing in the instrumental category with the exception of Instrumental Drums/Percussion and the Band categories.
13. TITLE PAGE – Each entry must have a title page displayed prior to the entry being shown. The title page should include the Category and the Title of the Entry. The title page can be inserted during the editing process or it can be done manually prior to the taping. It is acceptable to hold up a handwritten sign that states the category and title of piece.

Note: VA staff contact persons will be notified via E-mail with the competition results.

Tips for Taking Better Video Recordings

Please take a few extra minutes preparing a video correctly to give your Veteran the best chance possible during the judging process and to save hours of time with the judging process for our judges who donate their time.

- **Be sure to check that all videos play with video and audio before submission.**
- **Focus on the performer**, not the accompanists. Avoid taping from the back of the room. Stage presence cannot be judged if you cannot clearly see the performer.
- When video recording dance acts, it is necessary to include the whole-body in the entire recording, including the feet.
- **Sound control** is important! Clear audio makes a performance much easier (and enjoyable) to judge. Make sure your sound is good and balanced. Be aware of the background/accompaniment being too loud. Oftentimes we see/hear the speaker/player is next to the video camera and it is difficult to hear the performer.
- Consider holding your local competition and then video recording **ONLY** the first-place acts that will be sent forward for national judging.
- **Dance, drama, and music entries** will be accepted digitally (MP4, WMV, MOV) through the Arts4Vets App or via CDs. **If submitting entries on CDs, A SEPARATE CD MUST BE SUBMITTED FOR EACH ENTRY IN EACH CATEGORY. More than one entry on a CD will not be accepted.**
- **TITLE PAGE** – Each entry must have a title page displayed prior to the entry being shown. The title page should include the Category and the Title of the Entry. The title page can be inserted during the editing process or it can be done manually prior to the taping. It is acceptable to hold up a handwritten sign that states the category and title of piece.
- Label your CDs with the **city and state of your VA facility**. Also include the **division entering and category number**.
- Be sure to make a copy of your final CDs for your own file/library in the event of lost or damage. **CDs will be destroyed post-judging and will not be returned.**

Vocal Music Categories

Jillian Thompson (117C)
National Music Co-Chairperson
VA Medical Center
508 Fulton Street
Durham, NC 27705

Phone: (919) 286-0411 x17 7728
Cell: (512) 627-3977
E-mail: Jillian.Thompson3@va.gov

***Vocal Solo:** One Veteran singing.

***Vocal Group:** To meet the intent of the categories for **Vocal Group**, the group must have **more than one eligible Veteran singing**. (Example: One eligible Veteran being accompanied on instruments by other eligible Veterans does not meet the definition of a vocal group. Instead, that would be a vocal solo with accompanists.)

VOCAL SOLO

1. **Vocal Solo Country/Folk/Bluegrass**
2. **Vocal Solo Pop**
3. **Vocal Solo Rock/Blues** – Examples: Eagles, Rolling Stones, Elvis Presley, Queen, BB King, Buddy Guy, etc.

VOCAL GROUP

4. **Vocal Group Country/Folk/Bluegrass**
5. **Vocal Group Pop**
6. **Vocal Group Rock/Blues**

VOCAL SOLO OR GROUP

7. **Vocal Rap/Hip Hop** – Solo or group.
8. **Vocal Classical/World/Ethnic** – Solo or group. A vocal selection that reflects the music characteristics of a specific ethnicity, culture, or country. The selection should be from a culture other than that of English-speaking North America. Use of ethnic instruments as accompaniment is encouraged. This category does NOT include popular music.
9. **Vocal Jazz** – Solo or group. Examples: Louis Armstrong, Billy Holliday, Fred Astaire, Tony Bennett, Norah Jones, Diana Krall, etc.

10. **Vocal R&B/Soul/Funk** – Solo or group. Examples: Motown, Sam Cooke, John Legend, Al Green, James Brown, etc.
11. **Vocal Broadway** – Solo or group. Show Tunes, **not movies**. (Example: “People” would be acceptable as it is **also** from a Broadway show, not because it is from a movie. “New York, New York” would not be acceptable as it is from a 1977 Liza Minnelli movie.) *Specify the Broadway show after the title.*
12. **Vocal Patriotic** – Solo or group.
13. **Vocal Spiritual** – Solo or group.

ORIGINAL VOCAL

Original vocal compositions composed by one or more eligible Veterans judged solely on the merits of the composition. Lyrics and music must be composed entirely by an eligible Veteran/s and that Veteran/s will be the one entered in this category. A performer or group other than the composer may perform the work, but the composer(s) should be shown on the video. **A copy of the typed lyrics must be attached to the entry form** to aid the judges in evaluating the lyrics. It is helpful to the judging process to also send lead sheets.

14. **Original Vocal - General Topic** – Solo or group.
15. **Original Vocal - Military Experience** – Solo or group.

Instrumental Music, Band, and Special Recognition Categories

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***Instrumental Solo:** One Veteran playing.

***Instrumental Group:** To meet the intent of the categories for **Instrumental Group**, the group must have **more than one eligible Veteran performing instrumental solos/leads or make other essential contributions musically to the entry other than just accompanying.** There are no limits to the number of accompanists in the group but care should be taken that non-eligible Veterans (i.e., staff, volunteers, Veterans who are not eligible to compete) are not performing solos/leads.

NOTE: The presence of any singing in an instrumental entry will eliminate that entry from competing in the instrumental category, with the exception of entries in the Instrumental Drums/Percussion and Band Categories.

INSTRUMENTAL SOLO

- 16. Instrumental Solo Country/Folk/Bluegrass
- 17. Instrumental Solo Pop
- 18. Instrumental Solo Jazz/R&B/Soul

INSTRUMENTAL GROUP

- 19. Instrumental Group Country/Folk/Bluegrass
- 20. Instrumental Group Pop
- 21. Instrumental Group Jazz/R&B/Soul

INSTRUMENTAL SOLO OR GROUP

22. **Instrumental Rock/Blues** – Solo or group.
23. **Instrumental Broadway** - Solo or group. Show Tunes, **not movies**. (Example: “People” would be acceptable as it is **also** from a Broadway show, not because it is from a movie. “New York, New York” would not be acceptable as it is from a 1977 Liza Minnelli movie.) *Specify the Broadway show after the title.*
24. **Instrumental Patriotic** - Solo or group.
25. **Instrumental Spiritual** - Solo or group.
26. **Instrumental Classical** - Solo or group. Serious or conventional music following long-established principles rather than a folk, jazz, or popular tradition (mid 1400s – late 1800s). Examples include symphonies, concertos, oratorios, operas, sonatas, fugues or any combination of dance movements such as suites.
27. **Instrumental World/Ethnic** - Solo or group. An instrumental selection that reflects the music characteristics of a special ethnicity, culture, or country. The selection should be from a culture other than that of English-speaking North America. Use of ethnic instruments is encouraged. This category does NOT include classical or popular music.
28. **Instrumental Drums/Percussion** - Solo or group. It is the intent of this category to showcase non-melodic percussion instruments, i.e. trap set, congas, bongos, spoons, rhythm instruments, etc. This category would exclude percussion instruments that can produce an obvious melody line, i.e. xylophone, vibraphone, marimba, etc. Accompaniment may be present as desired and may include melody line OR VOCALS, but **ONLY** the percussionist will be judged. **Vocal percussion beat boxing should be entered into this category.**

ORIGINAL INSTRUMENTAL

New score of music. A new song entirely, not an interpretation of an existing song. Original instrumental compositions composed by one or more eligible Veterans judged solely on the merits of the composition. Music must contain a distinct melody line and must be composed entirely by an eligible Veteran/s and that Veteran/s will be the one entered in this category. A performer or group other than the composer may perform the work, but the composer(s) should be shown on the video. Lead sheets and chord progressions are helpful to the judging process but are not required.

29. **Original Instrumental** - Solo or group.

BAND CATEGORIES

To meet the criteria for the categories for Band, the group must consist entirely of eligible Veterans and must include **at least one singer and at least three instrumentalists**. **If all group members sing, the song must be entered into a Vocal Group category.** Each group member must offer a significant musical contribution to the group. Entries into this category will be judged by the overall performance of the entire group (vocalists and instrumentalists). All group members must be shown on the video. **Note: This category differs from the vocal group and instrumental group categories. Please reference pages 60 and 62 for explanations of the vocal group and instrumental group definitions. Also, be advised that a single entry may not be submitted into two or more categories within the same division.**

30. **Band – Country/Folk/Bluegrass/Pop**

31. **Band – Jazz/R&B/Soul/Rock/Blues**

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

This category is for vocal or instrumental music entries that recognize individuals who exhibit creative expression through the use of music while possessing significant physical or psychological limitations. The intent of this category is to reinforce the concept of the arts as therapy, where an individual uses artistic expression to facilitate successful treatment outcomes.

32. **Special Recognition**

Entries in this special recognition categories **MUST** also include:

- **A Word document containing a typed statement/narrative** (25 to 225 words) composed by a VA staff person or the Veteran explaining why the Veteran is deserving of special recognition. **Entries submitted without a write-up will not be judged.**
- Consent form 10-3203 and 10-5345 (included in this handbook) must be signed and dated by the Veteran. The staff contact person submitting the entry for the Veteran should safeguard the signed consent forms at their VA facility.

Sample Music Judging Criteria

Sample Music Judging Score Sheet

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Category Number and Name: | |
| Title of Entry: | |

(All Categories EXCEPT Originals)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Intonation (unless piano) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Rhythm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Interpretation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Stage Presence | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Blend & Cohesiveness (if group) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

TOTAL SCORE _____

(Originals)

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Melody Line | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Rhythm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Style | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Lyrics (if vocal) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

TOTAL SCORE _____

*Note: References to diagnosis and explanations of emotional or personal content related to the entry or Veteran will not be read or communicated to the national judges. The exception to this rule is an entry submitted into a category that require a write-up.

How to Submit Entries to the National Competition

National Competition Entry Submission Process – New Arts4Vets App

New for 2021 – Entries will be submitted **only by VA staff** to the national level of the competition using a newly designed Arts4Vets App. The app is still in the design phase. Live training sessions will be offered to VA staff and step by step instructional handouts will be distributed in advance.

Non-VA Staff from other government Veteran medical facilities unfortunately will not have upload access to the Arts4Vets App and may continue to submit entries in other ways. Please reach out to the National Director or division chairpersons to coordinate.

Veterans will not be able to submit their own entries through to the national level of competition or directly into the Arts4Vets App. They must work with the VA facility where they are enrolled and meet the local competition deadline dates.

Music Division Entry Form

VA Staff: Obtain additional Veteran contact information to notify Veteran(s) of the competition results.

| | |
|--|--|
| Category Number and Name: | |
| Title of Entry: | |
| Categories 11 & 23, specify from what Broadway show: | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Veteran Name: | |
| Veteran E-mail: | |
| If entering an instrumental category, what instrument is the Veteran playing: | |

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Group Name: | |
| Number of Veterans in Group: | |
| List all accompanists – everyone that is visible or heard on the video must be identified as an accompanist or eligible Veteran. | Accompanist's name: |

Veteran Group Member Information:

| First Name | Last Name | Instrument Playing, if applicable |
|------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

File Name: Files uploaded to the new Arts4Vets App will automatically be renamed to coordinate with the entry data. For local competition purposes, it is suggested to name the files in a way that works best for the local staff contact person(s). Suggestion: Division-Cat.#-Title of piece-vet initials

Veterans: By submitting entries into the competition, you are confirming the following statement is true:

I/we have read all the rules for the division in which I/we am/are entering. If my/our entry places first at the national level, I/we understand that I/we will be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. It is required that I/we attend and participate in rehearsals for the entire Festival week concluding with the stage show performance.

VA Staff Checklist:

- Veteran meets the competition eligibility criteria
- Veteran is approved to enter the NVCA Competition as a representative of this VA facility
- Veteran has signed the necessary consent forms (10-3203 and if necessary, 10-5345)

EVERY VETERAN MUST SIGN FORM 10-3203 TO COMPETE IN THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL CREATIVE ARTS COMPETITIONS. The signed form should not be submitted to the Arts4Vets App for national competition judging. The signed form must be safeguarded at the Veteran's VA facility.



Department of Veterans Affairs

CONSENT FOR PRODUCTION AND USE OF VERBAL OR WRITTEN STATEMENTS, PHOTOGRAPHS, DIGITAL IMAGES, AND/OR VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDINGS BY VA

Name of individual whose statement, likeness, or voice is requested:

NOTE: The execution of this form does not authorize production or use of materials except as specified below. The specified material may be produced and used by VA for authorized purposes identified below, such as education of VA personnel, research activities, or promotional efforts. It may also be disclosed outside VA as permitted by law and as noted below. If the material is part of a VA system of records, it may be disclosed outside VA as stated in the "Routine Uses" in the "VA Privacy Act Systems of Records" published in the Federal Register.

The purpose of this form is to document your consent to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) request to obtain, produce, and/or use a verbal or written statement or a photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording containing your likeness or voice. By signing this form, you are authorizing the production or use only as specified below.

You are NOT REQUIRED TO CONSENT TO VA's REQUEST to obtain, produce, and/or use your statement, likeness, or voice. Your decision to consent or refuse will not affect your access to any present or future VA benefits for which you are eligible.

You may rescind your consent at any time prior to or during production of a photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording, or before or during your provision of a verbal or written statement. You may rescind your consent after production is complete if the burden on VA of complying with that request is not unreasonable considering the financial and administrative costs and the ease of compliance of the number of parties involved and **the Veteran's VA facility and the Dept. of VA Office of National Veterans Sports Programs & Special Events.**

The photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording will be produced while I am (describe the activity or situation) **(To Be Completed by the Department of Veteran Affairs, if applicable)**

A participant in an adaptive sport or creative arts therapy program sponsored by the Veteran's VA facility and the Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events (NVSP&SE) and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Check at least one of the following (to be completed by VA)

☒ I hereby voluntarily and without compensation authorize Department of Veterans Affairs NVSP&SE and the Veteran's VA facility to produce a photograph, digital image, and/or video or audio recording of me (or of the above named individual if the individual is legally unable to give consent).

☒ I hereby voluntarily and without compensation authorize Department of Veterans Affairs NVSP&SE and the Veteran's VA facility to obtain or use a verbal or written statement from me (or the of the above named individual if the individual is legally unable to give consent).

I consent to allowing VA to record and use a verbal or written statement, or produce and use photographs, digital images, and video or audio recording for the purpose(s) identified below:

This product will be used: (NOTE: At least one of these boxes must be checked as well as a purpose described below) (to be completed by VA)

☒ Internally (stay within VA) ☒ Externally (shared outside VA)

Please check the applicable purpose(s) (to be completed by VA)

Promotional Efforts:

☒ Internal Publication (only VA) ☒ External publication (publicly available)

☒ Other (Specify): Newspapers, radio stations, television stations, participant profiles, souvenir program booklet and DVD, and other media outlets. In addition, VA may release this information to sponsor organizations of the National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events in the form of other media products to promote the positive aspects of creative arts therapy.

Research Activities: ☒ Study

Education Purposes:

☒ Presentation ☒ Conference ☒ Publication in a Journal ☒ Training

☐ Other (Specify):

VA ONLY Use:

☐ Performance Improvement ☐ Quality Improvement ☐ Health Care Operations

☐ Other (Specify):

☒ All of the Above

NOTE: Do not sign this form unless one or more of the boxes above has been checked.

I have read and understand the foregoing, and I consent to the use of a verbal or written statement from me, and/or of my likeness and/or voice as specified for the above-described purpose(s). I understand that no royalty, fee, or other compensation of any kind will be made to me by the United States for such use. I understand that consent to obtain, produce, and/or use a verbal or written statement, photograph, digital image, and video or audio recording containing my likeness or voice is voluntary, and my refusal will not adversely affect my access to any present or future VA benefits for which I am eligible. I further understand that I may, at any time, rescind my consent prior to or during production of a photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording. I also understand that I may rescind my consent after production is complete if the burden on VA of complying with that request is not unreasonable considering the financial and administrative costs, the ease of compliance, and the number of parties involved.

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------|
| Print Veteran Full Name (First and Last Name) | Veteran Signature | Date |
| <i>Permission Obtained By (TO BE COMPLETED BY VA)</i> Print VA Employee Full Name | Title | Date |
| <i>Signature of Person Obtaining Consent (TO BE COMPLETED BY VA)</i> Print VA Employee Full Name | VA Employee Signature | Date |

IMPORTANT: If VA is providing or releasing any patient health or demographic information with the verbal or written statement, photograph, digital image, or video or audio recording, VA Form 10-5345, Request for and Authorization to Release Medical Records or Health Information, is required prior to the release of such data to any source outside VA.

Tips for Organizing Local Competitions

Set the date for your local competition that works best for your medical facility. The deadline for submission of entries to the national level of competition is October 1 so be sure to allow time by September to prepare entry form information, necessary write-ups, as well as the art digital images, creative writing texts, and dance, drama and music video recordings for submission to the Arts4Vets App. **Entries may be submitted PRIOR to Friday, October 1 to ensure entries and all completed paperwork is received on time.**

Attempt to set a date that is open on your Facility Director's calendar. Send a written invitation to the Director, Associate Director, Chief of Staff, and Voluntary Service Chief.

Request to appear on the agenda for VAVS quarterly meetings. At this meeting you can inform volunteers of your local creative arts program and the possibility of Veterans from your VA facility receiving an invitation to participate in the Festival. This is also an opportunity for them to be become aware of any support that may be needed.

Publicity – Social media and word of mouth tend to be the best means of spreading the word about the local competition. A press release could also be prepared with a request to your Public Affairs Officer to submit it to your local news media. **A sample press release is included in the back of this handbook.** Create or **download the electronic format of the poster** to announce your local entry information (who, where and when entries are accepted), competition date, time and place. Produce a brochure/handout with the rules and other pertinent information. If your VA facility has a monthly newsletter, submit an article about your local show and ask that all staff encourage the Veterans from your VA facility to participate.

Decide what you will give the winners in recognition of their accomplishment (ribbons or medals). Also plan a certificate or other means of recognition for every Veteran who enters. Certificates are always good for all participants and are inexpensive if made in-house. **A sample certificate is included in the back of this handbook.**

Secure three to five judges each for the visual arts, writing, and performing arts divisions. These may be VA facility staff who have expertise in these areas however seeking judges from the community is often viewed as a preferable option.

Request that each Veteran complete and sign the necessary entry and consent forms. Use the information from the completed entry form to make the judges score sheets, arrange the order of the program, etc. When all Veteran entry forms have been completed, **double check to be sure they are accurate AND READABLE.**

Keep track of all Veterans who compete/enter through your VA facility and enter their information into **Local Level Participation form on page 15 of the handbook.** **Send this form to Arts4Vets@va.gov when your local competition has ended.**

Tips for Organizing Local Competitions (continued)

As it is a rule at the national level, it is recommended that no one Veteran be allowed to enter more than three (3) solo categories and three (3) group categories of any one division.

If you or another member of the staff does not play the piano or another accompanying instrument, contact Voluntary Service for possible volunteers. Other sources may be the Chaplain Service musician, local music teachers, local church musicians or the American Federation of Musicians. Veterans will usually perform better with an accompanist. A local drama teacher or a member of a community theater group may assist those participating in drama.

Local dance teachers are frequently willing to assist your dancers and teachers and other community members who are versed in writing poetry, essays, etc. would be useful in judging the creative writing entries. Do not forget your Nursing staff, Psychology staff and other staff. Many of them have a variety of talents and experiences in the arts and are very happy to work with their patients in a modality different from their regular routine. **Work closely with the Chief of Voluntary Service** from the beginning so they are aware of your potential needs. When possible, it is helpful if sources of funding can be identified before the national judging is completed.

If you do not have an auditorium, shows may be held in a gym, a dining hall, a day room, or many other places in your medical facility. Also consider looking into the community for potential connections with museums or service organizations. Have everything ready for the judges. Make one set of the judges score sheets (one for each entry), then duplicate enough sets for all judges. Have one person tally the scores as the judges finish scoring each entry.

Contact your first-place winners to complete any missing paperwork. You may also re-tape the dance, drama and music winners if you wish to give them some extra attention and opportunity to further polish their number before their entries are submitted to the Arts4Vets App for national judging.

Take digital images of the local first-place art. Retain each of the first-place art pieces in a secure place. If a piece is chosen as the first-place winner in its category after the national competition, then the actual art piece will need to be shipped to the Festival host site location.

Suggestion of statement to post at local competitions:

The National Veterans Creative Arts Competition and Festival provides our Veterans with an opportunity to gain recognition for their progress and recovery made through the creative arts therapies at the VA. The local competition at the VA enables our Veterans to share their talents and healing experiences with their peers and the larger community. Often the art may be related to past traumas, personal life struggles, or world views. Sometimes those who witness this art can experience emotional turmoil as well. Should you feel overwhelmed by the subject matter presented, staff members are available for emotional processing and support. Thank you for being here and supporting the Veteran community as they share personal experiences and life lessons in a supportive, compassionate environment.

Sample Press Release



News Release

Veterans Affairs Medical Center
Insert Address
City, State, zip code

For further information, contact:
Insert Contact name
Title
Phone

DATE

For Immediate Release

Sample Press Release **Veteran Art Competition**

Local Veterans Compete for Chance to attend National Veterans Creative Arts Festival

City, -Date Artwork by local Veterans will be on display to the public at the (Facility Location) on (Date) from (Time). It is estimated that over (#) pieces of art from among (#) different categories will be exhibited. VA medical facilities incorporate creative arts into their therapy programs to further the rehabilitation for both inpatients and outpatients. This annual competition recognizes the progress and recovery made through that therapy and raises the visibility of the creative achievements of our Nation's Veterans.

The first-place pieces will advance to the national level where they will compete with entries submitted by Veterans from other VA facilities from across the country. The competition is an annual event that provides Veterans receiving treatment at VA facilities the opportunity to participate in creative self-expression in art, creative writing, dance, drama and music as part of their therapy, and to gain recognition for these artistic accomplishments.

First-place winners from the national competition will be invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival held in St. Petersburg, Florida April 18-24, 2022.

#

In Special Recognition



Awarded To

In recognition of your participation in the
2021 National Veterans Creative Arts Competition
(City, State)
(Date)



Creative Arts Competition Chairperson